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[The Editor will be pleased to consider manuscripts if accompanied by stamped and addressed envelopes. He accepts no responsibility, however, for manuscripts submitted to him.]

Events of the Week.

THE disquieting announcement made by the well-informed Lobby Correspondent of the "Daily News" that the Cabinet were contemplating a great change of commercial and fiscal policy after the war in the shape of a prohibition of German imports is, we believe, without foundation. This matter, said Mr. Nicholson, was to be considered not only by the British Cabinet but by a joint conference of the Allies, and there was to be a scheme of preferential duties in favor of the Dominions. Such a project would, of course, be an absolute abandonment of Free Trade and a return to Protection in its most extreme form, while incidentally it would mean the death and burial of Liberalism. We do not know whether there is any more truth in the announcement of the "Times" of the coming commercial conference of the Allies, at which a resolution was to be moved that each member should bind itself not to conclude any commercial agreement with the Central Powers without the consent of the others. It has been said that Mr. McKenna, in addressing the Association of Chambers of Commerce on Tuesday, has given this project some support. We cannot discover any such tendency in his speech, which was rather a general promise of Government sympathy with the policy of developing the "master trades," with a view to the extension of our commerce with neutrals. A much nearer approach to the new Protection appears in a later address of Mr. Bonar Law to the Associated Chambers. Mr. Law was not explicit, but he hinted at an effort at commercial union with the Dominions and the Allies, coupled with economic hostility to the Central Empires. In other words, the war is to be an unending war, only the weapons will be changed.

These are vast questions, which cannot be sprung upon the country without full debate, not at a conference of Allied statesmen, but in our own constituencies and Parliament.

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The general situation still takes a deep color from Verdun, although a comparative calm has now fallen upon that area. The arresting feature of the recent assault is that failure to take Verdun is a failure of the German plan. Politically and morally, Verdun was the objective; if it was not the military objective it was probably because the soldier looked farther than the statesman. The occupation of ground within a few miles of Verdun, the capture of a number of prisoners and a certain amount of material, the flattening of a salient which looked towards Metz—these can hardly be considered as worthy of the Kaiser's auspices and presence. If the Germans meant anything, they must have meant to capture Verdun, and it is probable that even such a success was regarded as a first instalment in breaking through the Allied line and turning the Champagne positions, with the object of forcing a decision at a time and upon ground of their own choice. It has been suggested that they had as a secondary aim the handicapping of the Allied advance, but it is difficult to see how such a slight gain as they have made will affect the chances of the Allies if a simultaneous offensive upon all fronts is to be attempted. There is also the possibility that the long series of local offensives is working up in a rapid crescendo to a grand finale. But while there is much evidence to support this view, the success of the main blow would depend upon the Allies' general reserve being distracted away from the point of incidence of the attack, and it seems certain that Joffre and Castlenau have not yet drawn upon it. On the whole, it is most prudent to regard the German plan as not completely disclosed. It may have a very dramatic sequel.

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EVEN Verdun may be the scene of further struggles, since it is impossible to regard the present position as stable. It is true that the Germans have maintained a foothold at St. Mihiel for over a year, and yet have been prevented from profiting by it; but it is highly improbable that the same state of things could apply north of Verdun, even if either side would tolerate it. Yet the position at this moment has so existed without substantial change for a week. Last Friday the French fell back upon the main defensive positions along the ridge from Poivre Hill to the village of Douaumont. During the day Talon Hill and Champ Neuville had become isolated, and the village of Vacherauville had to be abandoned. The line east of the salient was withdrawn to strengthen the general position; but the withdrawal was not observed till long after it had been carried out in perfect order. It was upon Saturday that the most critical attacks were made. An assault had already been launched against Douaumont on Friday, but had been repulsed without much difficulty. On Saturday morning an intense bombardment was directed upon the Douaumont ridge, and seven separate attacks of infantry were made upon it. The first six broke down under the fierce

fire of the French; but the seventh, made by the Brandenburg Infantry Regiment 24, succeeded in gaining possession of the dismantled fort of Douaumont.

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It was a significant success. If the hold upon the ridge about Douaumont could be extended the French tenure of the town of Verdun was directly threatened. It was at this point that General Humbert threw in his local reserve, and the army corps went forward with such brilliant courage and decision that the Germans in the Douaumont work were virtually isolated. The French contented themselves with this success, and the Germans were unable to improve their position. So the line runs now. Champ Neuville and Talon Hill were captured; and the line skirts the southern slopes of Poivre Hill up to and including the village of Douaumont; it winds about the fort, towards Vaux and Damloup, west of Maranville and Manheulles. This village fell upon Tuesday, when the Germans first made their attack east of the Meuse.

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THE crisis occurred upon Saturday morning, and there has been no movement so critical since the Brandenburg Regiment secured possession of the Douaumont Fort. About Verdun, since that time, each side has been digging itself in. The bombardment opposition continues, and there were fresh attacks on Thursday, all of which the French official account describes as having been beaten off. On Sunday the Germans began another small local offensive by attacking the French position about Navarin Village, in Champagne. They appear to have taken the village with a certain number of prisoners. There have been other small subsidiary operations upon the French lines, but at present there is no suggestion of the grand attack towards which the assault upon Verdun might seem to lead.

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THE position at Verdun cannot be considered other than serious while the Germans remain in the work of Douaumont; but, on the other hand, they have gained so little that we are driven to reckon the significance of the struggle in terms of men. It is inevitable that in the evacuation of highly organized defence elements of the defending force should become isolated and be surrounded. Further, it is clear that the wounded of the retreating force must largely fall into the hands of the assaulting troops. The German claims are instructive. On Friday they claimed 10,000 prisoners. On Sunday the figure was advanced to 15,000. Two days later it was stated that up to Monday night the Germans had counted in "unwounded" prisoners 228 officers and 16,575 men. A French official comment upon Sunday stated that from the opening of the actions the number of French prisoners was hardly 5,000. This was at the moment that the Germans were claiming 15,000. Clearly, there is some incompatibility here which no amount of explanation can clear away.

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It seems clear that the Germans made the most of their successes. They magnified the Douaumont work far beyond its real significance, and the accounts in German papers had an ominous reference to their own great losses. We may be sure that the losses upon both sides cannot have been slight; but it is worthy of note that the French seem to have used their men with parsimonious care, and to have risked as little as possible. The French estimate that the Germans have lost about 130,000 men. On the whole operation, we may conclude that unless they can do more, they have suffered a measurable defeat.

THE Grand Duke continues to clear up the Caucasian and Persian situation. The Turks are being vigorously pursued north and south of Erzerum, and it is stated that the number of prisoners taken in the battles of Erzerum amounts to 235 officers and 12,753 men. It now seems that the capture of this fortress may decide the fate of the German and Turkish schemes in the East. As might have been expected, the Russians have almost immediately forced the fighting in Persia. The Turks had fortified two mountain passes to protect the Kermanshah-Baghdad road. On Thursday, apparently, after a series of fierce struggles, the enemy troops were dislodged from the passes and forced to retire upon Kermanshah. A few days later the Russians occupied this important town, and they are now pressing forward along the Baghdad road. The Tsar this week suggested that the British and Russian troops might soon be fighting shoulder to shoulder, and it is probable that this will actually be the case in Mesopotamia.

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PORTUGAL is probably on the eve of receiving a German ultimatum and declaration of war, as the result of her internment of the German ships in her ports. The measure is specially irritating to Germany. She has made, a little previously, every preparation for starting her sea-trade the moment the war is over. Portugal has behaved with great courage and self-respect, and, indeed, her entry into the *Entente* will nowhere be more welcome than to her old champion and ally.

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LORD DERBY made a blustering speech in the House of Lords on Thursday, in which he impartially attacked the Minister of Agriculture (for excepting too many farm-workers), the Board of Trade (for excepting too many industrialists), and Sir John Simon (for repressing the illegal administration of the Compulsion Act). Does Lord Derby want such an administration or does he not? He made two crude proposals, which really amount to a demand for a new Compulsion Act. The first was that a single man under thirty-one should not be allowed exemption on the ground of having been starved, or badged, or reserved, unless he was a munition worker; the second that no single or married man should be allowed to plead exemption as a starved worker unless he had been in his occupation before August 15th in last year. But how is the State, in fairness, now to impress these married men, having first guarded them from service, without express power from Parliament to do so? Lord Derby's speech, like Lord Derby's scheme, is a measure of Lord Derby's discretion, but not, we hope, of the pliability of the Government. We want soldiers, but they will be mere cannon-fodder unless we retain enough industrialists to arm and feed them.

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THE House of Commons practically decided on Thursday to take no account of the repeal of Habeas Corpus under Regulation 14 (b) of the Defence of the Realm Act. Mr. Ashley, a Conservative member, pleaded that the sixty-nine British subjects imprisoned or interned under this Regulation (fifteen of whom are British born) should be given some form of judicial trial. Mr. Samuel was obdurate. He detailed some of the cases, which, on his statement of them, showed pro-German sympathies or even action, and suggested that they ought not to be left at large. That is quite possibly true. But it is a long way from proving that they should be placed completely out of law, which can by no process either find them guilty or not guilty, condemn or release them; or that

if they are to be so outlawed Parliament should not have the power of saying so, and making the Government ask for an indemnity after the war. Mr. Samuel laid stress on the enemy "associations" of some of these persons. But association may mean anything, from trade partnership or acquaintance to blood and marital relationship. Thousands of worthy citizens, including, we imagine, Mr. Samuel himself, stand under the shadow of suspicion which such a grouping suggests.

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PRESIDENT WILSON's attitude towards his critics, which had been firm, has now become combative. When he first made it clear, in his letter to Mr. Stone, that he would not recede from his main demand that Americans have a right to travel in belligerent ships without thereby risking their lives, he deprecated any discussion in Congress, and seemed to plead for a silent assent to his policy. This was not altogether effective, and in the Lobby the pro-Germans still agitated for the issue of an official warning cautioning American citizens against sailing in British ships. The result was a tendency in Germany to discount Mr. Wilson, because it was said that he spoke for a divided nation. He has now decided (after a private canvass, which seems to show that he has a majority) to test the real feeling of the House of Representatives, and has formally asked for a discussion and a Vote of Confidence. These are bold tactics, and they will probably be successful, for almost any and every Parliament in the world will rally to the Executive in a controversy with a foreign Power—and such a Power as Germany.

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ON Sunday morning the P. and O. liner "Maloja," which was steaming down Channel, was sunk by an explosion within two miles of Dover. An official list gives the number of lives lost as 155, including 49 passengers. The crew, including the Lascars, as well as the passengers, behaved with heroic calmness. At first it was thought that the explosion was caused by a mine, but at the inquest both the captain and the chief officer stated that, in their opinion, the ship was sunk by a torpedo. If this view is correct, it bears striking testimony to the enterprise as well as the ruthlessness of the new German submarine campaign. On Wednesday there was made public the loss of a French transport with about 930 soldiers in the Central Mediterranean. There were about 1,800 men on board, bound for Salonika.

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IN an article in the "Daily Chronicle" Mr. T. P. O'Connor gives an interesting impression of the visit of the British Parliamentary delegation to Paris. After emphasizing the cordiality of the French welcome, he says that the chief feeling of the visitors was one of "humiliation" on discovering how much more their hosts knew of the inner history of the war, especially on the diplomatic side, than they did themselves. These hosts belonged, of course, to the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Chamber and Senate, and had seen all the vital documents, and enjoyed the opportunity of questioning Ministers and discussing policy with them in confidential session. This system, as Mr. O'Connor insists, carried out in relation to every administrative department, results in a real democratic control, and ensures worthy and important work for every private member. We hope Mr. O'Connor's colleagues on this voyage of discovery will join him in urging the adaptation of this system to our own Parliamentary institutions. Quite a number of books have urged this course for some years

back, but this visit has apparently done what all the books failed to achieve.

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It would be very agreeable to believe the stories as to the temper and condition of Turkey and Bulgaria which are current in the Press. It is reported this week, we believe with some truth, that Bulgaria has put out feelers for a separate peace through a Scandinavian intermediary, and in the Egyptian Press that Turkey has done the same thing through emissaries sent to Switzerland. They clearly dare not take this course separately, and if ever they do break away from Germany their fear of each other would urge them to do it together or not at all. The highly-colored narrative of the "Mokattam" would not be worth attention had not the "Times" correspondent in Cairo endorsed it. One need not believe that a preacher in St. Sofia has openly cursed the Germans and the Young Turks from the pulpit, nor yet that the assassination of Prince Yusuf Izzeddin was arranged by General Liman von Sanders. But the story of a peace offer in which Armenia was to have "autonomy under Russian suzerainty" (query, control?), England to withdraw from Mesopotamia, Prince Said Halim to be made Viceroy of Egypt, and a carry-on loan to be made by the Allies to Turkey, does look to us very much what a Young Turk's notion of moderation might be, and very unlike what anyone else might offer under that name. But dare Enver Pasha desert the Germans?

* * *

THE organization of national economy proceeds. A singularly poor contribution to it has been made by the report of the Committee on Retrenchment in the Public Expenditure. It is devoid of a single illuminating idea, and consists of detached and ill-thought-out suggestions expressed in scrappy and badly constructed paragraphs. Its chief proposals are an eight hours' day for Civil Servants; the closing of museums and picture galleries; the reduction of the cost of inspecting factories and mines; the exclusion from school of children below five with a view to a normal minimum of the age of six; the transfer of the medical work of the Board of Education for young children to the Local Government Board and local health authorities; the suspension of old age pensions in cases where the pensioners' means have been temporarily increased; and a number of jejune departmental economies and reductions of local expenditure. It is significant that the longest and most detailed report is directed against education.

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ON Wednesday a meeting, patronized by the Government and attended by a great array of national dignitaries and local representatives, was held at Guildhall, the object being to inaugurate a great national campaign. This is to be organized by districts. Mr. McKenna's chief point was the insistence on voluntary economy as an alternative to taxation. "If you will not tax yourselves and look into your daily budget, so as to subtract from it all idle expenditure, I shall have to tax you further." People's capital was now wanted for the nation, which would take it and pay full interest for it. Lord Kitchener added a soldier's appeal for a civilian army to support the Army in the field, both by increased saving and increased production. This is sound philosophy, but how can Lord Kitchener maintain these two armies if his recruiting officers insist in draining the last dregs from one vessel into the other? Finally, Mr. Balfour half-ironically suggested that the individual would do well to look to his own economy rather than to that of other people.

Politics and Affairs.

VERDUN AND BEYOND.

It is inevitable that there should be some over-statement of the importance of the great struggle at Verdun. It would be strange were it not so, for modern nations, no matter how warlike in speech and organization, are not warlike in spirit; consequently, they tend to visualize "decisions" in each new adventure. Even Germany had no notion of a long war. She is not warlike in that sense. She merely holds the atavistic theory that national disagreements must be decided by a national fight, just as the man of the Middle Ages looked upon the duel as the final means of deciding the right. It is this rather whimsical theory which produced a war-weariness before the war had well begun, and has tended to cloud our judgment ever since. Germany saw Paris and Victory on the Sambre, just as we saw Berlin and a humiliated Kaiser at Gumbinnen. The Marne, Ypres, Neuve Chapelle, Loos, Champagne, all dangled that golden vision. The Germans have had a greater number of encouraging stimuli. It is this unbalanced tendency which warns us to be reticent in our judgment as to any given incident.

Since the first deployment of the German armies upon the Sambre, suspense has never reached such an intensity as during the last ten days. With the Staffs of the Allies, the tension has been more prolonged; for this recent attack first rose upon the horizon as a faint possibility, a "cloud no bigger than a man's hand." There were movements upon the Yser nearly six weeks ago. There were later attacks in Artois, south of the Somme, at Frise, at Ypres, in Champagne, in the Vosges north of St. Die, in the Belfort district. And it was extremely difficult to understand their meaning. There had settled a lull over all the fronts, and these local disturbances, taken separately, did not end it, while in aggregate they amounted to a distinct unsettlement. The Allied Staffs were not slow to grasp that this was the preparation for an assault in force, and the French knew for some time that a great attack was to be made upon Verdun. It is this old war-wearied preoccupation with decisions which made the Germans look to Verdun for more than it held, and made the Allies regard the prospect of the attack more gravely than the actual fact. Neither of us seems as yet to have realized fully that the era of forts is at an end as soon as the huge armies of to-day, with the facilities of modern communications, have taken the field. The fall of Verdun was probably meant to counter-balance that of Erzerum, with which no comparison is possible, and the fortified place came to mean, even for us, far more than it was really designed to mean. Verdun is not a fortress in the old sense at all. It is a highly fortified place, comparable more strictly to the Salient du Bois Sabot, which proved so expensive a bargain in the Champagne attack last autumn. The rapid assimilation of the early lessons of the war, which may be summed up in the adage, *place assiégée place prise*, led Sarraill to invert the ancient system, and to set about defending his fortress rather than defend himself by it.

Inspired by this idea as well as by the natural choice of the offensive, he pushed and thrust his lines ever further from the town, and treated the fort more and more like the series of redoubts and fortified emplacements with which the whole line now bristles. Verdun came to be more and more assimilated to the critical salient it formed for a few days while the counter-offensive of the Marne was brewing.

Now a salient is directed towards motion forward. It tempts Providence in defence, but acts as a springboard in offence. Every salient is open to converging fire, and in evacuation is handicapped by converging lines of retreat. It is a cramping space to work in; and for all these reasons it encourages attack. The line about Verdun presented these features to the Germans. Within the loop cast about the town North and East, there was, at the opening of the recent attack, ten or eleven miles for the manœuvring of troops; and a fair proportion of that space was occupied by trenches and fortifications heaped together to an extent which has probably no equal upon any other section of the front. The main base of the salient may be considered as extending for some part of the line in Champagne to St. Mihiel, and no doubt the reduction of the salient was an object of the attack, either immediate or remote. But it is precisely this fact that gives us pause. We can be fairly certain that Germany hoped to set off the fall of Erzerum by the capture of Verdun. But her method of attack deserves careful examination. The line about Verdun made, as we have suggested, a cramped loop in which to work, and it was obviously sound tactics, and perhaps the only sound tactics, to attack upon the North and East simultaneously. Only by such means could the enemy saddle us with all the handicaps with which we had burdened ourselves. Only by such means could the most be made of the opportunities for attack which lay implicit in the salient.

It is significant that the attack was confined until last Monday to the Northern section of the line, and the assault upon the East did not develop until Tuesday, when Manheulles fell. Now such a fact may mean one of two things, and it can hardly mean anything else. It may mean that the Germans have come so near the end of their resources in men that they could not afford to attack upon both sides of the salient at once, although every consideration dictated it; or it may mean that the attack upon Verdun is only the penultimate stage of the German offensive, and that the mass of reserves is lying concentrated against some other part of the line. Just as the local attacks of the past month have had the effect of dispersing the reserves over the whole front, so the attack upon Verdun may have been aimed at drawing them thither while the main blow is aimed at some other point in the line. Whatever the success of the Germans, they have made a bigger dent in the lines than has been produced by either side since the war of positions commenced. The French have drawn in their line upon the East of Verdun to avoid some of the handicaps we have mentioned and to straighten and shorten their line. They have been compelled to abandon to the enemy a tract of fortified land to the North, which is over four miles deep in some places. These two readjustments are

not inconsiderable first charges upon any projected Allied advance, and they cause, for the moment, a temporary nervousness as to the whole of the position under assault.

In these circumstances the Germans may reasonably count upon a certain attraction of the reserves to the Verdun area, and such a condition would be the best, if not the indispensable requisite, for a grand attack upon another section of the front. Yet this must become less and less feasible as the days pass and each side digs itself into its new positions. Even a renewed attack upon Verdun must start under certain disadvantages the longer it is delayed; and we are driven back upon profit and loss. It is highly probable that the first lesson of the war will be that any place may be taken if one will pay the price. The Germans, it is true, began the war with that generalization; but the existence of permanent fortifications shows that it was not universally accepted. There can be no doubt that the Germans have paid a heavy price for the positions they have gained. It seems probable that, knowing we intend to force a decision when we are ready, they, faced with a relative shrinkage of resources, determined to force it now. The most hopeful subject for reflection is that nowhere has any significant attack been made by the Allies. We have treated this new attempt to enforce the recognition of German victories as a besieging army treats a sortie. We have not thrown in our general reserve at all. The local reserves have sufficed to bring the attack to a halt.

Without exaggeration this is surely one of the most hopeful signs of our superiority and one of the best omens of victory. We are not yet at the end of the German resources, and they have gained ground which we must win back later on. But they have not broken through; they have suffered great loss; they have gained extremely little politically, morally, militarily. They have shown us, perhaps more clearly than ever, the conditions of our success and the extraordinary prevision of Bloch. It is only by a significant preponderance that we can break the lines, and we cannot achieve that result unless all the Allies strike their hardest together at the pre-arranged signal.

FOUNDATIONS OF DEFEAT.

"The [London County Council's] savings on Education (maintenance and capital), for the next financial year, will probably reach nearly a million sterling, while the amount from all other sources together is only a fraction of that sum."

We do not know what definite results are to be expected from the meeting of ladies and gentlemen who approached the Guildhall attired in furs and conveyed in a stream of expensive motor-cars, and entered it as enthusiasts for national economy. But we beg them to remember that if the people can help the Government the Government can do still more to help the people. The main responsibility for expenditure is theirs. They began the war, they financed the war, and they determined the particular mode of waging the war. In other words, they decided for Continentalism. They proposed to maintain at once Continental armies on a scale of millions, an all-powerful Navy, and a stream of aids and subsidies to our Allies which

must amount in two years of fighting to over 800 millions. On this basis the nation was organized for the production of war industries. Two of their members did their best to obtain some equation of the resulting expenditure, so that the furtherance of the first of these objects should not endanger the second and the third. They were not successful, and as a result of this triple strain on our resources, we have had a war expenditure approaching five millions a day. We speak only of notorious facts when we say that the original provision for raising, housing, feeding, and transporting the armies was of the most profligate character. It mulcted the taxpayer of vast sums on high contracts. The bill, therefore, has been presented to the nation by the Government. But the Government, again, possess the most obvious, cogent, and easily available means of settling it. Mr. McKenna told the Guildhall meeting that unless the people ceased spending he would have to tax. But taxation is the automatic method of bringing needless expenditure to an end. The Government can tax wealth. They can tax amusements. They can prohibit luxuries by the simple process of stopping their import. Their resort to the first expedient has been quite inadequate, and as for the second, they propose to deal with a nation inapt at thinking and over-inclined to sensuous indulgence by stopping its supplies of paper and giving free course to its inflow of alcohol. Finally, it being necessary not only to check expenditure but to stimulate production in order to keep the Armies going, the War Office which, through the mouth of its chief, pleads for more civilian workers, sweeps the most unmilitary types of civilian into the Armies, and tramples out hundreds of small industries.

Now we wish well to an appeal to the nation to brace itself to the call of duty, and live simple and hard through its hour of trial. But we cannot treat this question of economy as if it were a mere exercise in cheese-paring. National Economy is the direction of the people's resources to their highest end. It is a problem of use, quite as much as one of abstinence. What are we in this war for? To beat the Germans? Yes. But not only to beat the Germans in war. It would be a small thing to do that, and then to fill on this earth for the next two generations a meaner place than this swarming aggressive race of militant industrials. But how can we keep at the top of the tree? We are spilling young blood like water, the finest, bravest, most adventurous members of our stock. What are we doing to replace them? We are deliberately proposing to make poorer provision for the minds and bodies of the children who have passed, or are now passing, from infancy into boyhood and girlhood. Is any great country engaged in the war doing the like? Our information is that Germany at least is not. The other day a proposal was made to stop the work of a branch of the useful movement for building up the bodies of very young children by means of scientific feeding and the instruction of mothers. The branch was at once informed that the Germans had decided to continue their corresponding movement, with special regard to its influence on the health of the

coming population. We take a different measure of the responsibilities of the State to the coming age and the men and women who will sustain it. The London County Council proposes to lower the standard of its teaching staff and to save nearly a million on its educational estimates. And the Committee on Public Retrenchment suggests that the minimum school age shall be raised from five to six years, and, as a *measure of economy*, that the Board of Education should lose control of its medical department so far as its superintendence of motherhood and the younger children is concerned, and that the service should be treated as a mere branch of sanitary work under the Local Government Board. In time, no doubt, there would be a complete amalgamation of the two medical services in the interests, maybe, of cheapness, but certainly not of education. Observe the disingenuous feeble-mindedness of the proposal. It can produce little immediate effect in the way of economy. The process of amalgamation of the two services will be difficult and costly. But it gets rid of a more scientific and fruitful form of social service in favor of a cruder and less pertinent one, and takes out of our educational system just that element of practical thought for the future which, very late in the day, we were beginning to supply and from which a really scientific educational structure can be built. In other words, it is a piece of blundering amateurism disguised as thrift—a blow struck, we suppose, in ignorance, at an entire conception and scheme of training for children. The day nurseries of the Education Department, its clinics, its open-air and special schools, its provision of meals, its care of motherhood, and of the difficulties of poor families, its physical and medical exercises, its special training of doctors and teachers, are parts of an educational, not a sanitary, problem. The child is taken at a very early age, and his small steps set at once on the path of physical and mental health. Now this process of betterment, conducted from mere babyhood to the limits of the school age, is to be cut in two, taken out of the hands of the school authorities, and handled, if handled at all, as a mere function of a sanitary official. Child labor on the farm is being rapidly extended, the over-large classes, which are the despair of the conscientious and capable teacher, are being swollen to still greater dimensions, so that not a day passes without fresh toll being taken of the life and intelligence of the child and of the future efficiency of the nation.

Now all this means the defeat of England. If England does not know how to spend she will not know how to save, and if she wastes her children she will sacrifice her manhood in a useless struggle with forces that are too strong, because too cunning and too far-seeing, for her. We make much call for a Man to deliver us from the many perplexities of the hour. But our defect is not so much in individual character, in which we have abundant wealth, as in largeness, nobility, and generosity of ideas, in national length and steadiness of purpose. A country whose conception of economy is to shut its museums and subsidize its racing-studs, to open its school-gate late and close it early, will find itself at the end of the war re-starting the race of civilization whole

laps behind Germany. What will it then be reduced to if it lacks the spirit of advance, the material for a re-conquest of all that it has lost, and an assault on new heights of independent aspiration and achievement? To the feeblest devices of the decadent Protectionist State. To a Chinese wall of tariffs and prohibitions. To a timid insularity which will revolt our democratic Dominions and stereotype our national conservatism of thought and habit. To become a prey of the most unenterprising and, finally, the most corrupt among our traders, the seduced of the most ignorant of our demagogues. For not the most smashing settlement against Germany would countervail for many years this self-inflicted defeat of a nation that, thinking to war against Kultur, turned its sword on Wisdom.

THE BEGINNINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT.

THE emergency of war has brought to an abrupt end the sacred convention by which the entire official intercourse of friendly States was confined to their Foreign Offices, speaking through their Embassies. That decorous but formal method was the natural expedient in the days of the coach and the courier. It survived modern methods of communication largely because the exclusive etiquette of diplomacy served to maintain its mystery and secrecy. This war has in the dealings of the more intimate Allies rendered the professional intermediary almost obsolete. Not only do the soldiers deal directly with each other, they even approach the politicians directly, and we read without surprise that the French Commander-in-Chief walks into Downing Street to discuss high strategy with the British Cabinet. Ministers come and go continually, sometimes singly, and sometimes in twos and threes.

It is unlikely that this intimate official intercourse will come to an end with the war. The fiction that Governments are too august to converse save by indirect diplomatic channels, could not for long have survived the development of the modern permanent alliance. Alliances in the old days were temporary arrangements for the common conduct of wars. The modern alliance or *entente* is as active in peace as in war, and it strays far outside the beaten tracks of diplomacy, to overflow into the domain of commerce and finance. It will seem an eminently natural thing in the future, when some critical decision has to be taken, that committees of the two Cabinets, or even the whole Cabinets, should deliberate in common. The various Ministries are hardly likely to abandon the habit of direct intercourse, and we can even imagine that chosen individuals in the two Governments might come to act as recognized *Ministres de liaison*. It is a healthy and businesslike development.

Important as this innovation was, we have witnessed this week another which may be even more far-reaching. Ceremonial visits of politeness between groups of Parliamentarians have been common enough in the past, but they led to nothing more definite than the expression of a vague goodwill. The meeting in Paris of delegations from the French and British Parliaments had a more ambitious aim. It is intended that it shall be a permanent institution, and a second meeting in London

is to follow the first conference in Paris at an interval of only six weeks. The newspapers have told us little or nothing about the deliberations of the delegates, but one gathers that they had a bearing on the common conduct of the war, and were meant to serve a purpose more practical than social intercourse. Such an institution as this may not in early days of its existence go much beyond the interchange of opinions and experience, but if it gains confidence and solidarity it might in the long run come to serve the Allied Governments as an invaluable guide and common measure of the public opinion of the two countries. It might not originate very much of real value while the war lasts, but it is easy to imagine that in the critical and formative months of armistice and negotiation it might be a decisive influence in shaping a constructive policy of peace. Neither the statesmen in office nor the diplomatists are likely to have the leisure of mind for such a task. If anything is to come out of the settlement beyond the alterations of the map which are usually the chief concern of treaty-makers, it must be by the pressure of an informed but unofficial public opinion. Parliament may possibly serve to focus it, but a standing committee which could speak for both the Western Parliaments, and deliberate on occasion in confidential sittings, would act with unique authority and effect.

The first result of these conferences, if we may judge from an interesting article by Mr. T. P. O'Connor in the "Daily Chronicle," and a similar declaration in "l'Humanité," is that the British delegates have gained a new and stimulating knowledge of the working of the French Parliamentary system. That system has stood the strain of war far better than our own. The House of Commons has weakly abdicated its control of finance and administration, and this surrender is itself only the culmination of a slow development which has gradually concentrated the reality of power in the hands of an omnipotent Cabinet. The French plan, by which a Chamber, exempt from the threat of dissolution, keeps Ministers in check by the simple expedient of dismissing them at frequent intervals, has its manifest inconveniences. Its wholly admirable side is the organization of permanent Commissions, which examine the Budget and the Estimates in detail in concert with Ministers, and so maintain a close and powerful control over finance and administration. Sitting in private, they can, even in wartime, bring their influence to bear on the more delicate and confidential aspects of the work of defence. If the French realized more promptly than our own Government the need for heavy artillery, for high explosive shells, and for a national organization of the munition industry, the credit lies, we believe, with the Commissions of the Chamber. They have been able to deal swiftly and without scandal with many incipient mischiefs of unpreparedness and corruption, especially in the sanitary service. They have also kept a close and well-informed watch upon the diplomatic machine. One realized during the debates which preceded the fall of the Viviani Cabinet, that they had been on several considerable issues at variance with the policy of MM. Millerand and Delcassé, and it was in the end their view which prevailed. The alternative in our own country has been that the press, or a section of it, has assumed the

task of criticism and control which Parliament was too inert and too ill-organized to perform. A critical press is better than no critic at all, but it lacks the responsibility, the representative authority, and the smooth, confidential working of these French Commissions. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had some thought, early in his Premiership, of adapting the French system to our own institutions. The case for it is strong even in its bearing on the control of the domestic departments of the Administration. It is overwhelmingly strong in the field of foreign affairs, and until we can set up some standing Parliamentary Committee which can at least discuss current and uncompleted business with the Foreign Secretary, we shall not approach the beginnings of democratic control. It ought, moreover, to be chosen on some basis more representative than the nomination of the Whips. This Allied Parliamentary Council may prove to be a first step in this direction. If our delegation is to meet the French on equal terms, it must have the same title to speak for the Commons as a whole, and, above all, it must possess the same grasp of affairs, the grasp that can only come from a continuous and confidential handling of them.

We welcome any step towards Parliamentary internationalism for another and remoter reason. Though it comes about as an incident of war it may do something to promote an attitude of mind which will give to representative democracy some place in a future organization of Europe. The facile hopes of the early days of this war have faded. It is possible that it may be followed by a period of sharpened antagonisms, trade conflicts, and punitive tariffs. The movement towards some general scheme for the organization of peace and the setting up of a standing Council of Conciliation may proceed very slowly against all the obstructions of hatred and reaction which war has called forth. When it does come it may assume at first a very timid and conventional form. From a standing council of diplomatists or instructed delegates of governments we should not hope for any great advance towards international understanding. It would work by barter. It would decide every issue not on merits but by deals behind the scenes. It would reflect the solid group loyalties and group antagonisms of a divided Europe. It would not be the impartial Areopagus in which a Great Power would readily submit to the risk of being outvoted. The outlook would be brighter if there were any hope that beside it, or below it, even in a semi-official form, a council of Parliamentary delegations might be created. In such a council opinion would not necessarily set on hard and impossible national lines. On some issues the Socialists, on others the Free Traders, on others the Conservatives would come together across national divisions to form parties based upon disinterested opinion. Such a council, even if it could do no more than pass resolutions, indicate dangers, and suggest solutions, would do something to create the international mind. What was begun this week between the Chamber and the Commons in a passionate crisis of the war, may have in it the seeds of a much bolder and broader development in the years to come, when across the trenches and the Chinese walls the Continent recovers its unity, and begins, after the life-in-death of war, in truth and reality to live again.

A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

"INTER ARMA"—the tremendous clash of the battle at Verdun has silenced, for the moment, thought about the end of the war. The deep anxiety of Friday and Saturday last is almost over. But we have still to determine the motives of the assault. Was it a political off-set to the fall of Erzerum, to inspirit the German and impress the neutral public; or an effort to break the French line and secure a way to Paris by a campaign of grand manœuvres in the open, superseding the war of trenches? If it is followed by a still more formidable attack in Champagne, this last aim will have been declared. If this fails, or Verdun holds (as it is now expected to hold), we have probably seen the last of the great German offensives. The giant Fafner will have received a deep if not fatal wound, and we may look (a) for a cautious but real extension of the German peace movement based on the plan of separate advances to each member of the Entente, or (b) for an effort to break our sea-power, or for both. But we must think also of what is likely to be the reacting power of the Anglo-French offensive, after having sustained the shock at Verdun and elsewhere. If that power is still great, the hopes one hears of an end of the war in the autumn may yet be verified. If not, we are in for a new period of deadlock.

YET amid these fierce alarms and distractions I find disappointment at the negative character of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr. Snowden. "What I have written I have written" is not precisely a novel historic decision, even though it appears in the reduced form of "What I have said I say again." Dreadful is the suffering at our doors, more dreadful the suffering to come. Is there to be no work of constructive policy? I find in nearly all men's minds an increasing passion to pierce through the gloom of war into some apprehension of the spirit and forms of the resulting peace. For example, I take up the "Round Table" and find in it an admirable sketch of what I should call peace under guarantees, *i.e.*, the settlement aimed at by every kind of thought that is not militarized and retains its faith in the ultimate harmony of European life. Of course, a British Minister cannot speak alone. These are matters for settlement among the Allies even in their earliest stages of development. But while Ministers are silent, policy is being formed, and before we know it we may find that we have stopped the war of rifle and shrapnel in order to take up the war of the boycott or the tariff (there is no real distinction between them), "the zoological war" that Renan condemned. Shall we not pause before the German Gospel of Hate is allowed to poison the wells of our thought, too?

I STILL observe a serious note of criticism of Admiralty administration. It takes in the main three or four forms. Is Sir John Jellicoe (ask those whose eyes are closely on the naval situation) given the full power of command and supervision to which his unrivalled authority in the Navy and the crisis we have reached in the war entitle him? Are his wishes sufficiently and

authoritatively represented in the Cabinet? Why does not actual experience of this war find its place on the Board of Admiralty? Is it safe to exclude from the Cabinet, and the War Council, and the Board of Admiralty, the ablest and most alert sea-minds in the Service, notably the chief constructor and organizer of the existing fleets? Has the Admiralty, having lost the two inventive minds once at its head, replaced them in the special qualities for which they stood? These are grave questions. I find no present answer to them with which the country can be content.

Few people realize the attack of violent illegalism which has run through the tribunals and the War Office. They don't realize it because the newspapers have ceased to report the Parliament in which this unexampled exposure has taken place. I turn to the speeches of Sir John Simon and others in which the revelation occurs, and here are some of the (uncontradicted) things I find in them:—

1. Flagrant and successful attempts of the War Office to override the provisions of the Compulsion Act, under which men attesting after August 14th, 1915, and rejected as medically unfit, have been illegally compelled to undergo a second medical examination, or have had their certificates of exemption torn up or "pocketed," or have been refused armlets. This attempt was first made in the illegal yellow form, and repeated in the equally illegal blue poster which Mr. Tennant, whose pledged word it broke, never saw or heard of, though nearly everybody else in London did. This last poster illegally ordered the production of a rejection certificate which had in some cases been destroyed. General result: Wholesale drafting of "crocks" into the Army or into clerical work at Army rates, as a measure of industrial compulsion (especially barred out by the Prime Minister).

2. Men not liable to service illegally threatened with treatment as deserters.

3. Persons who are the only support of poor mothers or widows (especially exempted by the Prime Minister and Mr. Long) forced into the Army. Example: A man, the sole support of his widowed mother (sixty-five, and suffering from rheumatism), refused exemption. In another case employers (who are being denuded of their workers) called on to make up the loss of salary.

4. A man, entitled to exemption, refused it, ordered to attest and bullied for daring to write to his Member of Parliament.

5. Men refused their promised exemption certificates on instructions from the War Office.

6. Head of a house employing 140 people, medically unfit, yet drafted into the Army as an unskilled clerk.

7. General neglect to appoint women and trade unionists on the tribunals (breach of pledge again).

Was ever such an orgy of blundering and bad faith?

I THINK there are hopeful features in the continuing struggle between Parliament and the War Office. For instance, in last Tuesday's debate, which ended in a brilliant victory for constitutional methods of enlistment, the pepperiness of Mr. Long, under Sir John Simon's unsparing exposure of the trickery and illegality of certain recruiting officers, was entirely natural and creditable. Although impartial in its distribution, Mr. Long's shrapnel fell with deadliest effect—as I imagine it was intended to do—on the concealed earthworks of the by-hook-or-by-crook type of compulsionist. Still more interesting was Mr. Tennant's defiant bearing and rebellious language (as I suppose one must call it) towards his unteachable officials—a clear case, to my mind, of a Minister appealing to Parliament against a jack-boot

bureaucracy. For unconscious humor, by the way, it would be hard to match the use made by Mr. Tennant, on the same occasion, of the Bank of England's application for exemptions for two hundred clerks—an application magnanimously supported, as the Under Secretary boasted, by the War Office Military Adviser. "Who happens to be a Rothschild," growled Mr. Healy, getting an effect from that swift and piercing thrust beyond the dreams of eloquence.

With the death of Henry James one seems finally to lose track of the Olympians of the nineteenth century. Olympian he was in bearing no less than in character, and in the great and delicate equipment of his mind. His brother William moved in a greater orbit of being; Henry seemed almost too absorbed in the intricate "key" movements of the machinery of thought and feeling to be aware of the vastness of things. His special sense (which is a godlike sense after all) was of the greatness of the little. His appearance suggested this minor absorption. The large eyes, conspicuous in the firm, imposing mass of the face and head, were not devoid of light; but their sombre glow seemed to be turned, not on the men and women around him, but on the spiritual company whose most sensitive biographer he was. He talked with deliberation (not with heaviness), and his judgments were singularly balanced. Yet behind his pondering air and formal courtliness, you felt that there was a power of passion (he felt most deeply, for example, against us on the Boer War and with us on the German War), which his literary habit held in reserve, but did not abolish. He looked, in fact, at once a man of the world and not of the world.

Of Henry James stories there are no end, many of which turn on the mingled simplicity, deliberation, and irony of his speech, or on his habit of searching for the right adjective, and his impatience of an inadequate substitute. Thus a lady at a dinner-table tried in vain to obtain from him a satisfying description of the reception and representation of one of his plays. She ventured to describe it as "successful." A pained look from the master was the only reply. The conversation turned to other topics, and after dinner James came majestically into view by the lady's side. "The word was 'wonderful,'" he whispered.

The effect was often more elaborate than this. A party of admirers visited him at Rye, and somewhat overstayed their welcome and the master's sense of the preciousness of time. A condoling friend hoped that the charm of the ladies had been some slight recompense. "Well," said James, "there was one poor wanton, with a certain cadaverous grace." He was not easily drawn from his later literary habit of recording the intricate inner movements of the mind, without much care for their development in deed. He was once besought to write a real novel of action. He cheerfully acquiesced, stamping his approval with popular phrases, such as, for all his careful diction, he often took pleasure in. "I know exactly what you mean, Mr. —," was his reply, "something doing all the time." The book arrived, crammed with

analysis, and with no visible link with the world in which "something" is always being "done."

HABEAS CORPUS DEFENCE FUND.

I HAVE to acknowledge, with thanks, the following further sums received for this fund:—

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A WAYFARER.

Life and Letters.

THE STYLE OF HENRY JAMES.

THE manhood of Henry James lay between one great war and another. We can guess something of the old man's attitude to our own war from his eloquent act. His adoption of British citizenship was a militant gesture, a deed which one ranks with the volunteering of younger men. We have sometimes wondered whether the Civil War had on the more sensitive intellects of his generation in America an influence as deep, but negative. There were at least three talents of the first order among them, Whistler, Howells, and James, and the art of all three developed as an exotic product. One does not define its peculiarity when one calls it a reaction under French influence from the dominant ideals and tendencies of contemporary America. Emerson and Thoreau and the whole New England school were also in some sense in a state of reaction against their environment. But they did not withdraw from it. They preached to it, and their sermon, when all is said, was its better Sabbath mind. The artists of the next generation were exiles. They had discovered Europe, and their interest in their own countrymen was concentrated on one study which absorbed them, the amused observation of the contact between two cultures. This sudden realization of Europe, its manners, its aesthetic standards, its non-moral outlook on life, the whole attitude which sees in existence an opportunity rather than a duty, was a moment in the evolution of America which was fated to come, and would have come without the war. But the violence of the literary reaction may well have owed something to the war. The distaste for all ideas which marked it, the boycotting of "causes" and "problems," the cosmopolitanism, the well-bred indifference to the affairs of

nations, the absorption in an esoteric art which sank no roots in the real world about it—all this is a not uncommon result of the fatigue and distaste which follow war. It is the instinctive, unformulated protest of the artist, who has no concern with the conflict of crude forces, and feels himself estranged from the irrational herds which can so rush upon one another. The France of the Restoration gave herself up to the same reaction in a literature of artifice, invention, and grace. The reaction from war may take in a reflective mind the shape of a conscious revolt against brutality and force. In a mind which is wholly dominated by aesthetic values, its effect is subtler, less positive, but quite as marked. The pure artist, in this case, does not revolt against force. He ignores it. The fascination of violence means nothing for him. He avoids all that is dynamic in life, not because he condemns it—condemnation is an inartistic attitude—but because it causes him some obscure subconscious pain. He will walk through life with a prudery that forbids him to notice the fiercer affections of mankind, passion and hate, ambition and greed.

An original writer is valued for his positive qualities, but the real meaning of him often lies even more clearly in what he omits. Henry James will live by the fineness of his observation of manners and speech, by the art that makes a slight tale entrancing, by the delicate comedy of his early work and the elaborate artifice of his later style. His place as a virtuoso in the creative literature of the English language is so secure and so unique that one need not insist upon it. His influence rather on the manner than the substance of the generation which has studied his models is no less obvious. If he learned his pleasure in pure craftsmanship from the French, it was in him an impulse personal enough to convey its magnetism to others. He made his own technique, and what is infinitely more important, he set a standard of technique. This new elegance, this well-mannered suavity and ease in the telling of a story, are indeed half the man. But in any estimate of him, his negative side is at least as important, and this negative side was not French. One may doubt whether any writer of any nation, of his calibre and skill, has ever drawn human beings with a refusal so steadfast to touch on their more dynamic passions, and their deeper thoughts. That avoidance in him was partly the effect of his artistic endowment. The virtuoso in him delighted in rendering significant and important the slighter moods, the minor affections, the lighter inclinations of mankind. One thinks of him as the literary equivalent to the modern student of psycho-physics, whose delicate instruments can detect the quickening of the pulse which does not reveal itself in a blush. It seemed to require a finer brush to make these imperceptible affections interesting and important, and the achievement of the *tour de force* satisfied his artistic ambition. It was partly the influence on him of the world in which he elected to live. The fleeting foreign colonies of Italy and France, which he observed for choice, are peopled by men and women who lead the life of a leisured class, without the passions of a native aristocracy. Here life is a long holiday, and if the man enters it who might develop a fiery love, a fierce, predatory instinct in commerce, or a devouring ambition in politics, he has left these passions for a season behind him. Exiles have done great creative work in literature, when an idea has separated them from their natural environment, but these exiles were fugitives only from the boredom and burden of life's realities. Half the literature of Europe represents a reaction against some traditional view of life in morals or religion. But alike in its naturalistic and revolutionary phases, it is a revolt

and a transition from one idea to another. In these Americans of the last generation, there is not so much a revolt as a sloughing of a discarded tradition. They undress in a more genial moral climate, and assume no new uniform to replace the garments they have doffed.

We confess ourselves to a commonplace preference for the early work of Henry James, and turn for entertainment to the novels of the 'seventies and 'eighties. But that is, we admit, a lazy taste. The maturity of his art, the thing which he labored to perfect, is to be found in the difficult books whose style repelled all but his devotees. We shall not readily forget our first contact with that style, the interminable sentences, the plethora of qualifications, the multitude of adjectives, the total absence of architecture and structure. One felt at first as if one were trying to read a novel in a foreign language which one had only half learned. By dint of looking hard at the sparse nouns and verbs one could just gather "the sense" and summarize the unsubstantial tale by a rough process of translation. We used to imagine that we were listening to a new work by a contemporary French composer. It seems at first to be only a formless mist of very little sounds, a background of pleasant and unintellectual impressions, out of which a rare musical phrase occasionally detaches itself. As one grew familiar with the strange medium one discerned a method in it. It conveyed with a singular realism the confused course of actual experience. It was story-telling, not from the standpoint of the detached observer, nor yet was it story-telling by the memory of the central personage of the tale; it was a kind of psychic photograph of the actual internal happenings in the bosom (we do not say the mind) of the chief character. The intellect distorts and simplifies and shapes. Here in these full sentences, these slow-moving paragraphs, was the raw mental stuff of experience, emancipated from the understanding, with its arbitrary selections.

Oddly enough this style, this technique of Henry James the novelist, seems to rest on an instinctive perception which might be expressed in terms of the doctrine of William James the psychologist. It was he who popularized the notion of "the stream of consciousness," and threw into relief against the more intellectual and mechanical psychologies the whole wealth and confusion of experience, and the blending in it of sensations which are purely physical, with the ordered stuff of perception and thought. It was he who dared the paradox that we are sad because we cry. Both brothers had the same interest in borderland psychology. One wrote a great ghost story, and the other investigated the doings of mediums. Both represented that detached attitude of the intellect which takes little direct interest in ideas for their own sake, but probes with an infinite curiosity in the warm forcing-bed of emotions and sensations in which ideas arise by some process of mental fermentation. The later style of Henry James was far from being an arbitrary development of virtuosity. It was a manner of arranging words and presenting mental experience which reflected an expert observer's theory of consciousness, as closely as the experimental methods of an impressionist or *pointilliste* arise from an analysis of vision. It is not so much the mannerism of a literary man as the method of an artist who is struggling to record the full confusion of the conscious life, as the painter struggles to reproduce light. It brought with it the same emphasis on color rather than form, and the sentences of this great stylist came in the end to be shapeless collections of words, abhorrent to the classical taste, because they

strove rather to reflect the manifoldness of the whole field of consciousness than the simplicity of the mere intellect. It was a daring and interesting achievement, but we question if it will live, save as a curiosity of literature. One may study "The Finer Grain," but one turns for pleasure to the limpid style and the genial comedy of "The American" and "The Europeans." They are not life perhaps, but they are a polished mirror of its conscious surface, set in a light frame of consummate elegance and grace.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF BELGIUM.

THOSE who believe in a Providential order of the world—that nations, as men, reap what they have sown—may find some encouragement to-day in the influence of Belgium in the world's affairs. The "crime," as the German Chancellor called it, was committed. The crime of the violation of a guaranteed neutrality was followed by the crime of a deliberate frightfulness. The hope of Germany is that all this may be forgotten—lost in the vast subsequent cataclysms of war. But the world refuses to forget. The first shameless affirmation may be evaded. Books and pamphlets explaining, excusing, or denying have been showered throughout the neutral world. Counter-charges attempt to palliate the wickedness of it—reports of Russians in East Prussia, reports of fictitious ~~military~~ ^{military} conventions between Belgium and the Allies before the war, denunciations of the Bryce Report, assertions of Belgian "franc-tireur" attacks, charges against the Belgian priests, the Belgian women, the Belgian children. All passes away as a little smoke. The crime against Belgium stands out unforgotten. These apologists are lying, and the whole world knows that they are lying, and that they know that they are lying. The verdict of to-day will be the verdict of history to-morrow. In familiar comparison, Belgium hangs round the neck of Germany like the albatross round the neck of the Ancient Mariner. All the rough and difficult things which the Allies are compelled to do, even to the straining of international convention, receive forgiveness when the mind of the non-combatant goes back to the origin of the war. "Over all the world," writes a great American paper, "there is a weariness of strife and a longing for peace; but how instantly such a longing vanishes before the re-telling of the Belgian crime, of the German iniquity which is written in blood and arson on a whole countryside! Peace is an abomination if it comes to leave Germany in one single least circumstance a gainer by her crimes. There is no other issue in this war, no question, no principle, until Belgium is freed, restored, rebuilt. Let us never forget Belgium."

Two remarkable documents, recently published and of historic importance, will certainly prevent the world from forgetting Belgium. The one is the "Appeal to Truth" of Cardinal Mercier, a letter addressed to the Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops of Germany, Bavaria, and Austria-Hungary. The other, in the current number of the "Revue des deux Mondes," is an extraordinarily graphic and moving account, written by a high official who was in the middle of it, of how the challenge came to Belgium, and how Belgium received it on the evening of Sunday, August 2nd, 1914. Cardinal Mercier shares with King Albert the honor of being reckoned as one of the heroes of the great war. With moderation, without violence of language, in a style which itself carries conviction, he challenges the German Bishops to appoint a joint

tribunal, with an equal number of Belgians, and with an impartial outside chairman, that the world may know where the truth lies. *Ad hoc veni in mundum, ut testimonium perhibeam veritati* is the text of his letter, as he reminds the members of his own Church—fellow Bishops and Cardinals—that "on the day of our episcopal consecration we vowed to God and the Catholic Church never to forsake the truth, to yield neither to ambition, nor to fear, when it should be necessary to show our love for it." His words are like blows. "We know that these shameless accusations of the Imperial Government are calumnies from end to end. We know it and we swear it." He mentions crimes which he declares "cry aloud to heaven for vengeance." With a kind of irony he inquires: Is it not better for Germany herself to clear herself by the verdict of such a tribunal, from accusations which have circumnavigated the world? "We are well aware that you are reluctant to believe that the regiments whose discipline, honesty, and religious faith you say you know, could have allowed themselves to commit the inhuman deeds with which we reproach them. You want to persuade yourselves that it is not so, because it cannot be so. And, constrained by the evidence, we reply to you that it can be, because it is." "When foreigners from neutral countries question us as to the manner in which the German invasion was conducted, and when we tell them of certain scenes, to the horror of which, in spite of ourselves, we are compelled to testify, we strive to lessen the impression which the narrative would make, feeling that the naked truth passes the bounds of credulity." It is past, he thinks will be the answer. Nothing can undo the past. "Rather turn your minds to forgiveness and unite your efforts with those of the occupying Power, which asks only to staunch the wounds of the unfortunate Belgian people." To which he replies, first, that it is not past—Belgium is feeling the iron hand: the wounds are bleeding of a nation which has been martyred, its people starving or driven beyond the sea; and, secondly, with an appeal to an Eternal Justice concerning the crime of a nation which refuses "to admit it, or to utter a word of regret, or a promise of reparation." So, to the fury of the German press, who demand the prohibition of the Cardinal from re-entering Belgium, comes the challenge which has gone out to the whole Catholic world and beyond. Small wonder that his presence in Rome has checkmated the machinations of the Austrian and German Cardinals, and that his progress through Italy, from Rome to Florence, from Florence to Bologna, from Bologna to Milan, has been a triumphal procession, greeted by immense crowds with generous and fierce acclamation.

M. Albert de Bassompierre does not deal with the war of frightfulness. He describes, instead, the actual events, almost hour by hour, in graphic narrative, when the Horror of Great Darkness fell on a little people who had lived their peaceful lives, offending no one, with one overmastering passion, devotion to their little land—"notre cher petit pays," as he calls it—and its independence. He frankly admits that the Belgian Government, long before the war, had drawn up plans for resistance against violation of Belgian neutrality from whatever quarter it might come—even from those which seemed at the time to be its friends. He describes the atmosphere of oppression in which were passed the last days of that terrible July. Again and again the German Minister assures the Belgian Government that whatever happens in the general upheaval, becoming ever more inevitable, Germany will be faithful to the guarantee of neutrality which she has given to Belgium.

Even on the morning of the fatal Sunday on which the ultimatum was launched, the German Ambassador personally reassures M. Davignon. "Le toit de votre voisin brûlera peut-être, mais votre maison restera sauve." But in the evening comes the news that "the Minister of Germany wishes to see M. Davignon," and after a few moments of anxious silence the ultimatum is presented, which was to change the face of the world. They enter the room of the Foreign Minister and ask what has happened. "I have received the paper. I have said that I will examine it with the King and my colleagues. We have twelve hours for reply. But I was not able to conceal my indignation. I have said to M. de Below that we might have expected anything except this: 'L'Allemagne qui se disait notre amie dévouée nous proposait le déshonneur.'"

So he describes the deliberations of the King and Council all through that hot August night: the unanimous and resolute determination never to give way; the discussions being occupied, not so much with the answer, as with the inevitable consequences which that answer would bring. Not until daylight had returned was the thing done, and an insolent challenge thrown back with the unanimous reply: "The Belgian Government, in accepting the proposals which have been made to her, would sacrifice the honor of the nation, and at the same time betray her duty to Europe." Then follow hours of nightmare, the vision of the people all unconscious of their doom, the last despairing hope that Germany may yet stay its hand, broken down by the news of the violation of the frontier. On Tuesday the King is driving down to the United Chamber amid frantic applause, mingled with tears. Even a member of the Austrian Legation, a chance spectator, joins in these overwhelming emotions at this "great affirmation of the will to live of a whole people." "Je ne l'aperçus qu'en me retournant quand le Roi fut entré au Parlement. Il s'essuyait les yeux." Finally, blood has been shed, and the irrevocable had been accomplished. There are sorrows and emotions, unforgettably, unforgettable: but the narrative ends on a note of pride. "Pour avoir résolument poussé l'honnêteté politique jusqu'à ses dernières conséquences, la Belgique était, d'un seul coup, entrée dans la gloire."

But that glory was bought by unspeakable outrage and suffering—and later by a patience which continues to-day, as one of the wonders of the world. This week a member of the American Commission reports that there are in Belgium three million starving people, only kept alive by the one meal a day which the Commission is able to supply—a meal of three thick slices of bread and a pint of vegetable soup. For this pittance of food they stand in line from one to three hours a day. And meantime the Germans are offering work to these men, at high wages, in Germany, for munitions and war work, which they deliberately refuse. Perhaps the patience, even more than the passion, of Belgium will be reckoned in the future as her claim to glory: when

"You will say of all heroes, 'They fought like the Belgians.'"

And you will say, 'He wrought like a Belgian his fate out of gloom.'

And you will say, 'He bought like a Belgian his doom.'

And that shall be an honorable name,
Belgium shall be an honorable word,
As honorable as the fame of the sword."

"When you see a people," wrote Lamennais, "loaded with irons and given over to the executioner, do not hasten to say that it is a turbulent people, seeking to trouble the peace of the earth. For, perchance, it is a

martyr people, dying for the human race." But this people will not die. It will be restored to its ancient heritage, with more than it has suffered added to it, with the possession of an imperishable renown in the future, through all recorded time. The night is still dark over Europe: but there are signs of the coming of the dawn. And when Germany—defeated, her dreams of conquest shattered, her trade destroyed, half her fighting male population maimed or dead—finally accepts peace, her ruin will be due, not so much to the great armies of France and Russia and Italy and this Empire, or the ships that ride on all seas. It will be due to that first crime from whose consequences she can never escape, anger against which has raised those masses of fighters against her and inspired those unconquerable navies, and made the world convinced that they are fighting in a righteous cause. It will be due to the faithfulness of a little nation, which, knowing what was the worth of her honor, refused to break her word.

"A WINTER'S TALE."

THE present wintry spell is just a meteorological fluke. It is barely freezing in the shade, and at noon each day all is a-drip, but as half-an-inch of rain happened to fall just at that touch-and-go temperature, it took the form of six inches of snow. A wind was blowing, so the snow was piled in drifts often six feet deep. Respecting no roads, it often choked them full, and for a day or two there have been villages without bread and country houses without the daily paper. Still, it is as mild a winter as we have had in twenty years, though the snow inevitably sets us talking about glacial periods of long ago.

Twenty-one years ago the Thames was so full of floating ice that it tinkled like bells from shore to shore. At Blackfriars, a man ran across, leaping from floe to floe. Undergraduates of that generation skated from Cambridge to Ely, and in the vacation got most of the way from Tewkesbury to Worcester on the frozen Severn. London took up her water-pipes, frozen for the first time in a century, and laid them deeper. That rare frost has thus cost subsequent builders millions of almost certainly unnecessary expense. For a fall of snow as deep as the present one, we must go back thirty-five years, at which distance we can remember the roads cut through deep banks as they are now, and hamlets in the south calling in vain for bread for almost a week.

Sometimes the talk of bygone weather calls up with a nice date a story to show how human character may have altered in the course of a generation. Someone has been telling us a tale of a winter when he was a young man. He and his brother were building a house for a man who rejoiced in the respectable Christian name of Job. They left work on Christmas Eve, and were hindered by frost from taking it up again till the first week in April. That surely fixes the year for anyone who has a complete record of the weather up to forty years back. They had bided their time with country patience, but Job, at least once, had visited their shed and taken out the plans to look at the picture that was so long in materializing. When the builders were at work again he entered smiling. A thought seemed to strike him. He took out his "rule," and measured the floor. "Young men," he said, "I think you are making a mistake." "Not as we know on," they said. "Surely," said Job, "you have got this room twelve feet, and it ought to be fourteen."

A really scientific man might have suspected at once

that the frost had contracted the building, but these were country builders who simply "knewed they was right." Job asked them to produce their plan, and then it appeared that the frost had expanded its lines so that they measured everywhere two feet more than they had done before. Only the fickle thaw had brought up again the inner lines that perhaps had once seemed to be completely rubbed out. In spite of this strange phenomenon, the young men went calmly on with their brick-laying, leaving it to time and the County Court to decide who was to pay.

When they were preparing to put in the first floor wall-plates, Job once more appealed to the drawings. The elevation had expanded as well as the plan. They really must carry the wall a foot higher. Seeing a little further than Job and willing to buy peace so cheaply, they acceded. Shortly they were at the second ceiling, and it stood barely six feet above the first floor. "No, no, that would never do," said Job. "An eight foot room had been contracted for. Look at the plan." Again the mysterious document was examined, and then it was found that the frost that had stretched so much had forgotten to stretch the entire elevation, and that the extra foot on the first floor could only be had at the expense of the second floor. Job had to agree to pay £5 a course for seven courses in order to make the upper rooms accord with the lower ones.

It is scarcely credible to our generation that Job actually took a fall in the County Court rather than abandon his clumsy attempt to get the better of his builders. His neighbors of that day would not be horrified at his depravity. They would even applaud the cleverness of his scheme to reduce the builders' profits, then laugh at his failure in its execution. And what is a law court but a sort of gaming-table at which the bold and skilful player may sometimes win far more easily than at honest toil? We know no better than anyone else what are the relative values of cleverness and honesty at the present day, but little stories like this show what they were twenty or thirty years ago.

Short Studies.

PEARL ISLAND.

A HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

I.

I LUNCED on board his yacht. "If," said he, "I told you what this yacht was built for, you would call me a liar. She's finished her work now and made her last trip. I was a young don and they were all undergraduates together, Brown, Jones, and Robinson. Brown had the best head. Jones, a decent fellow, rather slow. Robinson, not deep, but very knowing and a bit cynical. How I got them to do it I had rather not try to say. It would spoil the story, so don't ask. Anyhow they did it and stuck it out to the end.

"We used to argue about economics. What makes trade booms and trade slumps? Would the production of wealth go to pot if people changed their habits and dropped bedizening themselves with frippery? Robinson said it would. Brown said it wouldn't. Jones, undecided and open to conviction either way. One day I said, 'Try; we've lots of money and all our lives.' There and then I laid down the rules and conditions as follows: The three of them to go on a desert island of a promising kind with tools and seeds, but no stores. Property in these to be equally divided. From the moment of landing no intercourse with the outside world, but free barter and exchange among themselves, with scrupulous respect for the rights of property secured. My yacht to stand by and pick up wireless calls once a year. The

party to be pledged to stay until agreement should be reached among all three on the theoretic point at issue. The most important condition was that each man was to govern his behavior on the strict assumption that they were all there for life. Any accumulated property saleable afterwards in the outside world was to go to the Dogs' Home. I had to make this condition because I could not trust Robinson to play fair. As it turned out the condition did not operate, and the test would have been fair without it.

"I found the exact place and landed them there. There was a beach with a habitable cave. Inside the reef there was a rich oyster-bed. At the back of the island, where the coast was inaccessible, there were plenty of hogs and pigs in the thick jungle. There was really no land you could cultivate without first clearing it, and you could not even get at the hogs to domesticate them until you had driven a road with the axe through the thorn which screened their beach off from the interior. I left them there with their tools, seeds, three copies of the conditions on vellum, and a wireless apparatus.

II.

"A year later I cruised up as per contract to stand about for signals. I didn't have to wait. They were already at it, flapping madly as soon as I got within range. 'S.O.S. clear the line, matter most pressing, women. Very urgent.' I was expecting that and had them on board, Joan for Brown, Maria for Jones, and Mathilde for Robinson. I flapped back an answer to this effect. Then they started coding the 'Benedicite.' Brown had been in College choir and knew it by heart. It was brought to me in sections every half-hour all day. What the Navy and Merchant Service in those waters thought about it I don't know. I had just had, 'O Ananias, Azarias and Misael, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever,' when we dropped anchor off the reef. I took the skipper on shore to marry them. Brown and Jones nearly crazy with childish gratitude. Robinson pretty cool and standoffish. 'Can't afford to marry yet a bit, got to think of things.' I offered to take Mathilde back, but she was for staying notwithstanding. Regular old-fashioned governess type. Quite above suspicion and reproach, so I thought.

"Next they reported progress. At first they had had to work all day hacking thorn to get at the hogs and make a clearing for potatoes and corn. Meantime they lived on oysters and had to spend an hour or two diving. Robinson from the first began bringing up pearls, and consequently had to do with less. The others laughed, but he said, 'All right; you wait.' Sometimes when he was extra hungry he bought half-a-dozen oysters off them for a couple of pearls. By the time I got there he had a stack of pearls, and they had worked it out so nicely that he could take bacon and potatoes, representing one day's full work, and have a holiday in exchange for so many pearls. In fact he bought their labor. Brown fell in with this, because he said pearls had some aesthetic value. Jones winked, and said, 'Joan and Maria are coming.' Jones, on the whole, lent rather a ready ear to Robinson, and conceived some respect for him. Consequently, when Robinson laid aside a third of his share of the grain and sugar harvest and produced it later in the form of whisky, Jones plunged rather and bought up the entire stock in exchange for two-thirds of his own share of the harvest. The result, as Brown observed, was not good. For some time afterwards Jones would have felt hungry if he had not been drunk. When he got sober again, and hungry, of course, he had to sweat about all day on jobs to Robinson's orders, just to earn his day's keep. This came out of the foodstuff he had paid for the whisky. Robinson put his hired labor into the distillery business, and he bought more whisky out of his wages. And so it went on like a merry-go-round.

"In his leisure time Jones dozed or potted about and improved the clearing with loving care. Robinson drafted company prospectuses designed to lure Brown and Jones into exciting projects of commercial production. 'We must vary the demand,' he said, 'and create new wants to satisfy. Otherwise we shall stagnate.' Brown put in his spare time differently. He had a bass singing

voice, huge for an Englishman. Deep, sustained chest notes like a lovesick gondolier, the sort of thing that makes the wire mattress shake under you when you're trying to get to sleep in the small hours at Danieli's Hotel. He was always roaring folk-songs or mouthing Blake, Shelley, and Walt Whitman. He made an ocarina, too, out of a univalve shell, with a note like a cooing dove. Before Joan turned up I believe the row was incessant. It was certainly awful while I was there when he first had Joan about the place—'Wotan,' 'King Mark,' 'Sweet Kitty,' 'Through bushes and through briars,' one after the other. At dusk he would sit, stand, or lie in his skin on the beach and contort his neck, trunk, and legs. 'You don't understand,' he said, 'rhythm is all-important, but outline is very important. I have got it now so that I can feel my outline. The three-dimensional boundary where I leave off and everything not me begins is the key to life, the eye of the spirit. The hole I make in space fits me all round like a glove. I can feel it like contact. That's what makes it so important to be the right shape. When I lie in bed I'm not only a mere mass of inert comfort like you. I'm that and something more, something significant and essential like a drawing of Morpheus by Flaxman, only a drawing in outline which is sensitive and alive and feels.'

"On the whole, they lived pretty well it seemed—enough to eat and spare time to enjoy themselves in their different ways. The only pill was—well, the distress signals, and my cargo cured that.

III.

"After that, for ten years in succession, the signal was 'Sheer off; all well.' 'No agreement yet.' The first nine years I sheered off, but the tenth I stood in and went on shore. Robinson was still a bachelor, and Mathilde, roped with pearls, I'm afraid, after all, no better than she should be. The Browns had ten children and the Joneses eleven. It would have been a dead heat, but Maria had twins one time. Brown and his lot were practically naked, and it suited them. Robinson had a mantle of scarlet, peacock-blue, and canary-yellow feathers. The children picked up the feathers and Maria made the coat. Payment in both cases, pearls. The Jones crowd looked a trifle slatternly, like a lot of moulting birds—Robinson's cast-off finery, I took it to be.

"I was glad I had gone ashore, because there had been bad feeling and some pretty active quarrelling. Population was beginning to press on subsistence. There had been a couple of poor harvests and some sort of murrain among the pigs. Robinson fell foul of Brown for sentimentalizing over his joy in seeing the children eat. 'You're worse than Dr. Stockman in the "Enemy of the People,"' he said, 'guzzling little brutes!' Brown took it up and said Robinson was having it both ways. Pearls had increased and food hadn't. Consequently prices had gone up and wages hadn't, since Robinson continued to pay the same customary number of pearls for a hundred feathers. 'The result is,' said Brown, 'that they have to work longer to earn the wherewithal to buy the same amount of sugar-cane. It suits you down to the ground because you get more feathers. In other words, the price of food, expressed in pearls, has risen, and the price of feathers, expressed in food, has fallen, as any fool might know they would, with you inducing them to do feather stunts when they ought to be doing food stunts.' They settled this dispute for the time by a rise of wages.

"But Brown wasn't satisfied, and he began instilling his ideas into Jones. He said: 'Here we are, all these mouths to feed and not too much to do it with—certainly no margin laid up against calamity. We ought to concentrate on the larder and have a year's supply of preserved stuff laid up in the cave. My wife's going to have another baby, and—here's Robinson turning good barley into whisky and seducing your children and mine with his beastly pearls into wasting their time picking up his silly feathers when they ought to be digging and planting.' Then Robinson got his shirt out. 'You know the rules of our game as well as I do, free exchange between willing buyer and seller. They

want the pearls. That's why I collected them, for their exchange value. I want the feathers. All's fair. As far as I can see I give your brats remunerative employment at recently increased wages. They want food, do they? Then let them pay for it with the pearls, if they can find a seller.' Brown fairly let out at this. 'You blamed fool, where's the seller when nobody has any to spare? And how can there be any to spare if nobody produces more? And how can they produce more if you engross the time of the whole community in your "remunerative employment" of picking up feathers? And it isn't as if we got a new Iliad, Ninth Symphony, or Monna Lisa out of it. Not a bit of it. What we have in you is merely a two-pence colored edition of the "Last of the Mohicans" in decayed parrot quills, that, and the Jones's Church parade in your *démodé* creations of 190(n-1).'

IV.

"I saw they were back where we used to be in my College rooms, so I left them to fight it out. But I potted about within call, and in ten days I got it. 'Point settled. Take us off.'

"The day after I left there had been a local typhoon. Don't ask me. Read Conrad. It swept and drowned their settlement flat and clean. When I got there they had been back on oysters for a week. But it wasn't the easy time they had at the start. They said it was astounding what a lot of oysters it took to fill those children. They were simply pickled with being all day in the brine. The first day Robinson brought up pearls from force of habit. Brown and Jones carefully sorted them out for Robinson's supper and breakfast. 'Diseased oysters for you, my boy,' they said, 'and learn not to be a thundering fool again. But if by any chance you are, we'll clout you on the head.' Robinson thought it over all night and in the morning said, 'I give in. Brown's point of view is the right one.' Then they sent the call."

F. H. L.

PENDANT.

The story of Pearl Island is a very old one. But, since the modern disguise may cloak too closely the writer's intention to state only the exact and serious truth about the facts of human life, it may be well to relate the argument in plain language and under the old forms.

The man who tells the story, the owner of the yacht, is the Creator. This is conveyed in the hint of the "Benedicite," which is given in the particular context chosen, because sex, in its nearer and remoter harmonic resonants, is the most enriching chord in Nature's music.

The Creator, then, creates Brown, Jones, and Robinson, the three chief types of mankind. The first is the artist and thinker. The last is the man of the world and of commerce. The other, Jones, is the average mass of men, not richly endowed, who will mostly think and act as they are told.

The Creator places all three on an island, this world, with their limbs and faculties, and the vital resources of animate nature. They are to stay there, whatever the pains and difficulties, until they can find out the truth of things, and agree upon it.

The development of each and their consequent reactions on their environment and on each other, attempt to follow exactly the ascertainable course of human history.

The Creator provides women. Brown and Jones love, marry, are faithful; have children and are happy. Robinson chooses otherwise; he abstains from marriage. Now there exist, happily, forms of celibacy which spring in varying degrees from altruism. There is the celibacy of the triple vow; and, apart from this, men and women are always found who renounce posterity for themselves—just as there is now a great host who have made the final sacrifice, and renounced life itself—in the pursuit of noble and unselfish ends. But this is not the common case, and the latter end of Mathilde reveals that it is not Robinson's. She is that scapegoat, without whose vicarious sacrifice, as Lecky long ago pointed out, the adult male mass of apparent celibacy cannot co-exist with

respect for marriage and the "honor" of unmarried women.

The three men first act in unison. They labor for necessities in sufficiency. When this is achieved, and they have at disposal a free surplus of time and energy; bifurcation begins between Brown and Robinson. Mr. G. E. Moore has pointed out in his work on Ethics that nothing can properly be called good or bad in a moral sense except states of mind. The question before Brown and Robinson is, "What do you regard as good? What do you admire? To the attainment of what end will you devote your surplus energy?" They answer this question very differently. Brown's chosen aim is the completest attainable development and exercise, to the glory of God, of the utmost powers of the body, mind, and soul, and the joy which only mastery in that exercise can give. No money can buy it. It must, to borrow a phrase from Mr. George Bourne, be bought by the "ascending effort" of the individual. The possession, when it is won, is within the man himself, and is part of him. Robinson's choice is the pride of annexing, or seeming to annex, the possession of external things, not organic to the man himself, but affording evidence of power over others—the pride of ostentation, the soul state of the Red Indian. Jones's choice, a short cut to Elysium, lands him elsewhere.

A slight subsidence in the material crust on which the community stands brings these two opposite tendencies into open conflict. The impending threat to subsistence enables Brown to prove to Robinson that the latter has been mistaken in believing that his materialist creed is more favorable to the real essentials of merely material welfare than his own counter aim, which seems to lay less stress on material values. Robinson, in fact, is a keen-eyed man who cannot see the wood for the trees. As it becomes evident that the community is misdirecting its energies in seeking to create new commercial tastes to satisfy, Robinson's comfortable doctrine, that by his past accumulation of superfluities and present directing control of labor strength he is "giving remunerative employment," is confuted by the terrible logic of the universe. The facts, as they stand, indeed show that the pursuit of Robinson's aim has all along been in direct competition with the production of a safe margin of necessities. Dives is, in fact, the actual cause of Lazarus, and not the disconnected and enviable phenomenon for which common opinion has generally mistaken him.

The typhoon is the war, and Robinson's supper of pearls is the unrealizable lumber of our luxury civilization, representing past exertions misapplied, which might now have been available in the form of a larger, healthier, and better instructed population to fight the battle for right and freedom.

Letters to the Editor.

THE GOVERNMENT'S OPPORTUNITY.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—Women suffragists, who by this time are growing a little weary of being told that they are fit for everything except the elementary rights of citizenship, will be grateful to you for mentioning in your admirable article on "Women and the War" "that the foundations for this work of energy and skill were laid not in war but in peace." It is a relief to know that to THE NATION at least the presence of women in public life was known before the outbreak of war, and cannot, therefore, logically cease to be a presence after the war is over. This might not seem to be worth emphasizing but for the fact that some people, not excluding certain members of the Upper House, seem to think that women as "persons" are to be allowed to exist for the period of the war only. You have disposed of this amusing heresy in your article; but will you allow me to point out that you have not indicated the way by which the State of the future is, as you say, to be "based on the co-operation of the whole community"? That way lies open at the present moment, and

many women are wondering if the statesman exists who is big enough to see and to take it.

Lord Lansdowne has twice stated in Parliament (last November, and on the day of the Prorogation) that it is the intention of the Government shortly to revise the Parliamentary Register in order to secure their votes to men who are absent on active service; and Sir John Simon, when Home Secretary, went further, and, on behalf of the Government, foreshadowed the proposed change as one "to adjust and shorten the period of qualification"—a proposal, however, he went on to say, that "does not involve any change in the franchise law." But, I submit, to shorten the residential qualification is to admit so large a number of new male electors as virtually to constitute a measure of manhood suffrage. Can this change be effected without an accompanying measure of redistribution; and with or without redistribution, can it be truly defined as a change that does not alter the franchise law? Quibbling apart, all these foreshadowings of the Government's intentions with regard to the rights of male electors constitute a real danger to women suffragists; for every politician knows that redistribution is not tackled lightly or oftener than once in a generation, and to settle it now without at the same time settling the question of women's votes (which would, of course, alone make redistribution essential) would be equivalent to postponing woman suffrage for a generation. Even remembering the long line of disillusionments and broken pledges that lie behind us in the years that have gone, I think women will find it hard to believe that at a moment like this, when they are giving everything they have to give to keep the country going in the men's absence, the opportunity should be taken to give more votes to men without at the same time settling the far more urgent claims of their voteless sisters.

But this is the constructive side of my argument: what at present looms as a danger in the eyes of those who have been deceived and put off again and again can be turned into a great opportunity. The Government are pledged to safeguard by special legislation the voting rights of men before the next General Election. Let them call their Bill what they like, it must be to all intents and purposes a Franchise Bill, unless it is going to add to the anomalies and abuses of the present register. Nothing could be simpler than to make their measure a vehicle for admitting women to the rights as well as the responsibilities of citizenship. I am aware that the "Anti" in the last ditch (I think you overlooked the last ditch when you said that the "anti-suffrage case is in ruins") will call this controversial legislation. But is it as controversial as the legislation which has established conscription as the law of the land or robbed British subjects of the right to trial? If the war can be used as an excuse to take away our liberties, it can be used as a great opportunity to extend our liberties. I honestly believe it would go far to re-establish national confidence in our rulers if they were at this crisis to do something that would reaffirm those principles of constitutional freedom for which thousands of our young men have gone out to give their lives. Nothing could more effectually assure these men that their country is worth dying for than the abolition of the Prussianism at home which keeps their women in political slavery.—Yours, &c.,

EVELYN SHARP.

16, John Street, Bedford Row, W.C.
February 28th, 1916.

"LOOKING FORWARD."

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—I read with great interest the leading article entitled "Looking Forward" in your issue of February 19th, an interest which was in no way diminished by the fact that I was sitting in a most uncomfortable front-line trench, with an aerial fight and an artillery duel in progress as I read. May I state the difficulties which I feel with regard to your position?

Before the war, Mr. Norman Angell used to warn us that nearly all the common confusions of thought on matters relating to armaments and foreign policy generally were due to an inability to think in terms of your opponent as well as yourself; and no doubt he was right. But surely there are times when it is not only dangerous, but wrong, to pursue the policy of thinking in terms of two; for instance, when you are dealing with an homicidal maniac—or with

modern Germany. When you write, "This is the moment for which the real watchdogs of civilization—i.e., the men with an affectionate insight into life and a religious belief in it—must be waiting, and which they must seize," are you not assuming that there are such watchdogs on the other side of the Rhine? That is where my chief difficulty lies. For my part, when I look across the Rhine, I search in vain for "the watchdogs of civilization," and find rather "the hounds of hell, with Hate by their side."

So many, I believe, feel to-day that, in dealing with Germany, we are outside the realms of that common humanity which we had believed to be the common possession of all civilized men. To-day it is a case of the "German conscience" versus the "human conscience" (or what we had believed to be the human conscience), of *Kultur versus Civilization*.

Modern Germany seems to possess what Plato called "the lie in the soul," and no amount of Platonic dialogue will turn her eye towards the light of the sun.

At the beginning of the war I tried, in common with many others, to draw a distinction between the German ruling classes and the German people. Since then every section of the German people has loudly proclaimed by its acts and words that no such distinction is possible. Does anyone believe that the German people, should they be compelled to sue for peace, will do so because they believe "Bernhardism" to be wrong? No; it will be because Bernhardism has been beaten, and for no other reason. That is a fundamental question.

To me it is incredible that at the conclusion of the war our statesmen should calmly meet "scrappers of paper" like von Bethmann Hollweg, or even "Intelligentsia" of the type who would drive Herr Liebknecht from the Socialist Party in order to discuss terms of peace for a Europe which they, and they alone, have devastated and mangled beyond recognition.

"Security," you write, "is inconsistent with the dominance of any one Power."

Is it inconsistent with the crushing of one?—Yours, &c.,
B. L. S.

February 29th, 1916.

THE MEETINGS AT DEVONSHIRE HOUSE.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—May I be allowed to reply to Sir George Makgill's letter? I desire to confine myself chiefly to the Monday lunch-hour meetings at Devonshire House, and do not wish to enter into a controversy regarding "conscientious objectors."

The statement that these meetings are "propagandist and pacifist meetings which form part of the campaign which is being waged against the war and against the measures that have been thought necessary for the defence of the country, not only by the Society of Friends, but by the Union of Democratic Control and a large number of Pacifist bodies" is not strictly correct; the Society of Friends has no connection with the Union of Democratic Control, neither have any of these meetings been "stop-the-war" meetings. Their object from the very beginning has been an educational one, as there is such a great need for level-headedness and clear thinking on national and international questions. When peace terms are discussed, as they must be sooner or later, we wish to be able to approach the matter in an intelligent manner. The interrupters, who are apparently chiefly members of the Anti-German Union, do not base their opposition on what is said, as they begin before either chairman or speaker are in the room. Last Monday's debate on "The desirability of Friends continuing their peace work in war-time" was arranged at the suggestion of a member of the Anti-German Union who was one of our earliest disturbers, but, curiously enough, his fellow-members declined to allow the debate to take place, and he himself did not venture into the meeting until it was declared closed. The objectors are evidently extremely anxious to prevent us from stating our case. Why is this? Is it because that case is good or bad? If the latter, surely the mere statement of it would do us more harm than all the opposition; if good, have we not a right to state it?

Our case is a good one, and the objectors seem to realize this by their refusal to hear it.

Possibly Sir George Makgill is writing without a full knowledge of the facts. The Anti-German Union, together with representatives of the Press, were invited to a conference at which the objects of the Monday meetings were fully stated, and had Sir George accepted this invitation, our position would have been clear to him.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I feel sure the Society of Friends has not advocated "down tools," or appealed to "class hate" in any circular they have issued.—Yours, &c.,

W. RUSSELL FRAYLING,
Hon. Secretary.

Devonshire House, 136, Bishopsgate, E.C.
February 23rd, 1916.

THE QUAKER AND THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—I am afraid the agreement which Mr. Roberts welcomes between my views and his own is rather superficial than real. Mr. Roberts objects, as I do, to the exploitation of conscience for political ends. So far so good. The conscientious religious objector *qua* religious objector must submit to the law, humbly accepting such exemption as may be granted him. But the religious objector has a political conscience as well as a religious one; consequently, as a conscientious political objector, he is free to work against the Act as much as possible; in fact, he is bound to do so. Seriously, does Mr. Roberts think this kind of casuistry quite worthy of the time?

It is not that I do not appreciate the theoretical distinction drawn by Mr. Roberts, but of what value is it practically? A man cannot divide his actions into watertight compartments in that way. Are the schools which the Fellowship of Reconciliation is holding to train objectors in suitable confessions of faith for the Tribunals schools for the development of the religious or of the political conscience? Do members of the Society of Friends who have managed to get seats on the Tribunals, where they support exemptions "on principle," justify themselves by their religious or their political conscience; and what does their action look like in the light of common honesty?

Mr. Roberts apparently considers it impossible for those who object to compulsory service to refrain from agitating against it. Why? May I remind Mr. Roberts that there are several laws, passed before the war, which are regarded by large sections of the community as "wrong in principle and pernicious in practice," and that would have been made the subjects of vehement agitation had it not been for the national peril? But these objectors were ready to put up even with what they considered an injustice rather than weaken and divide the country. Cannot the objectors to compulsory service follow this good example? The nation has recognized their religious scruples; cannot they in their turn recognize that they owe something to the nation?

There is another point which I would urge Mr. Roberts to consider: indeed, all your correspondents, and particularly Mr. Morland. He writes that the exemption of the Friends from military service sets them free to prepare for the problems of peace. Has Mr. Morland realized that his exceptional leisure is due, not so much to a remarkably generous and tolerant nation, though that is true in part, as to the existence of the Navy?

A great deal is heard about conscientious objections to service in the Army; but the Navy is kept discreetly in the background. Is it because so many conscientious objectors are in their secret hearts glad to know there is a Navy in the background? So long as we have our unconquered Fleet, even the worst disaster on land cannot reduce England to the condition of Belgium. If Germany had her cruel claws on England as she has them on Northern France, how many conscientious objectors would remain? And if Mr. Morland were himself a homeless fugitive, ignorant whether his nearest and dearest were alive or dead, would he have much power to reflect on the "vast spiritual implications" of war?

Is it unchristian, Mr. Alexander asks, to help others who are striving after the truth? How can I answer except with Pilate's question? But I think many of us who have been reading daily the nauseating pleas of men who would not defend their own mothers, who would not help a

wounded soldier, who would let a whole transport be swept to destruction without lifting a finger, have wondered where Christianity, the religion, we thought, of courage, self-sacrifice, and care for the weak, has gone to. Some of us may have looked back with regret to the old pagan warrior who at the last moment refused baptism because he preferred to suffer with his comrades in Hell than join the saints in Heaven. One thing we are sure of, that however narrow the way, it will always be wide enough for the men who, hardly knowing whether they have a conscience or not, answer the plain call of duty and go to the help of the hard-pressed soldiers who are fighting and dying for them.

This letter is already too long, but I should like to add one word with regard to Mr. Alexander's general position. I do not think discussions of this kind are much advanced by the quotation of isolated texts, otherwise I might suggest that the Fellowship Conscience Schools are a direct breach of the command to "take no thought how or what ye shall speak"; but I think Mr. Alexander's view may trouble some who hold as we do that England and our Empire are as noble a gift and as great a trust as ever was given to a nation to preserve, even at the cost of death. Is love of country, they may ask, so completely ruled out of New Testament ethics?

The patriotism of country did not exist among the Jews in New Testament days, for nations in the modern sense had not then arisen; but the patriotism of the city was as fervid among the Jews as among the Greeks; and there is at least one incident that goes to show that our Lord was not so much out of sympathy with this national feeling as Mr. Alexander fancies. What meaning the theologian may put on the incident I know not; but I, at any rate, cannot doubt that the Man who beheld Jerusalem and wept over her, lamenting her fall in words so perfect and so touching, loved the city which even He had not the power to save, as men love their Motherland to-day. And if we may with reverence attribute our imperfect human judgments to the All-Perfect, surely we may feel some confidence that the sacrifice of patriotism is not wholly without merit to Him who set the supreme example of sacrifice.—Yours, &c.,

GEORGE MACKILL, Secretary.

The Anti-German Union, 346, Strand, W.C.

March 2nd, 1916.

THE BURDEN OF THE SINGLE MAN.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—It is reported that the Government has under consideration a Bill for the relief of married soldiers from their liabilities in connection with insurance premiums, rent, &c.

Possibly single men are now considered to be without any rights whatever; otherwise it is surely iniquitous to afford relief to one class of soldier and refuse it to another.

In my own case (which is typical of hundreds) I am closing down my business, but am still liable, under an agreement, for a large sum for rent. The payment of this sum will absorb more than the whole of the remainder of my capital, and I submit that such cases as this should be dealt with by an Act affording relief to those called to the colors.—Yours, &c.,

CONSCRIPT.

March 1st, 1916.

THE STANDARD OF EXEMPTION.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—The tribunals which examine the pleas for exemption from military service are giving us a splendid opportunity of realizing the relative values we, as a nation, place on things. To be maimed, to have conscientious scruples, to be the only support of a delicate widowed mother, are seen to afford far weaker claims to consideration than to have a business absence from which would entail financial loss. Teachers at best are given niggardly extensions, but yesterday, at Brentford, a brewer was granted total exemption because "it was obviously impossible for a brewery to supply beer without its brewer."

Will we ever learn to be ashamed of setting up as golden calves what should be cast into the uttermost depths

of the sea, and of placing money in an infinitely higher category than principle and human affection?—Yours, &c.,

M. M. ANDERSON.

10, Park Terrace, Glasgow.

March 1st, 1916.

ON STYLE.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—It is not my practice to wrangle with reviewers, but in view of your rather severe strictures on the style of my new novel, "The Stranger's Wedding," I venture to put forward a small plea for freedom. To particularize, you object to the following sentence: "She played on, not demanding his attention, now a fugue." Well, the model for this form is not obscure; the phrase derives from Verlaine's sparkling lines:—

"Elle parle, et ses dents font un miroitement,
Italien avec un léger accent Russe."

Gallicism? Sir, I submit there are no Gallicisms in a language so romance as ours. I use new forms, as did my betters, Gibbon, Carlyle, Henry James. I say that English is not dead, that it intermarries daily with American and French for its good. Academies and their "wells of English undefiled," their "glory that was Greece and grandeur that was Rome," wish to stuff the English language for the amusement of the future. Not men of letters, but taxidermists.

I, and not alone, claim mastery of the words I use, and reject grammatical slaveries. I will say that the moon is cream cheese if by so doing I make you see the moon. I will not be bound by Stevenson or any other, for the thing of to-day cannot be said in the phrases of last week. We cannot dress the ideas of 1916 in the phrases of 1860. One effect: that is all we want. Futurism? Perhaps, but, anyhow, it is the future.—Yours, &c.,

W. L. GEORGE.

Savile Club, 107, Piccadilly, W.

February 26th, 1916.

IMAGISM.

To the Editor of *THE NATION*.

SIR,—How often have not the Prose-Impressionists confused this 'white blur' with essential significance? says your critic about my poem "Malady," published in "Cadences"; but he misses the whole point: the man is ill and cannot see; and there is no impressionism, therefore, but exact rendering. Surely, your critic does not exclude from art a blur *qua* blur!

As regards his general remarks about Imagism, the adjective which suggests itself to me is "monoidiotic," which is what Shelley might have used in his "Essay on Poetry" about such criticism, if he had known of it.—Yours, &c.,

F. S. FLINT.

11, Douglas Road, Canonbury, N.

February 25th, 1916.

P.S.—I congratulate you on the three Imagist poems by Joseph Campbell in the same number.

Poetry.

THE WHITE CASCADE.

WHAT happy mortal sees that mountain now,
The white cascade that's shining on its brow;

The white cascade that's both a bird and star,
That has a ten-mile voice and shines as far?

Though I may never leave this land again,
Yet every spring my mind must cross the main

To hear and see that water-bird and star
That on the mountain sings, and shines so far.

W. H. DAVIES.

The World of Books.

THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

- "Letters from America." By Rupert Brooke. With a Preface by Henry James. (Sidgwick & Jackson. 7s. 6d. net.)
 "Leaves from a Field Note-Book." By J. H. Morgan. (Macmillan. 5s. net.)
 "The Main Illusions of Pacificism." By G. G. Coulton. (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes. 5s. net.)
 "The Austrian Court from Within." By Princess Catherine Radziwill. (Cassell. 7s. 6d. net.)
 "The Poems of Robert W. Sterling." (Milford. 2s. 6d. net.)
 "Stonefolds." By W. W. Gibson. (Elkin Mathews. 2s. 6d.)
 "Frey and His Wife." By Maurice Hewlett. (Ward, Lock. 3s. 6d.)

AN article by that veteran historian, M. Camille Jullian, in the current number of the "Revue de Paris," calls attention to a literary anniversary which was submerged by the catastrophe of a year and a-half ago. Its title is "Le Cinquantenaire de 'la Cite Antique,'" and it was intended to appear in 1914, for Fustel de Coulanges published his famous book in October, 1864, when he held the chair of history at Strasburg. In spite of its European reputation, no English publisher has thought it worth while to issue a translation of "The Ancient City," though a book called "Aryan Civilization," based on the work of Fustel de Coulanges, was printed by a Chipping Norton bookseller. And this neglect has not been due to any lack of appreciation by English scholars. Mr. G. P. Gooch, for example, praises him highly in his book on "History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century." In France, "The Ancient City" has long taken its place as a classic. M. Gabriel Monod claims that it is a masterpiece which will last as long as the French language, and M. Jullian classes it as one of the three outstanding historical works written during the Second Empire—the other two being Renan's "Life of Jesus" and Taine's "History of English Literature"—and he asserts that the half-century that has passed since the publication of the book has taken from it none of its charm, its power, or its truth.

FUSTEL DE COULANGES was a great literary artist, but he believed that his reputation rested on the fact that he was the founder, or, at any rate, the most complete representative, of the scientific school of history. He wrote well, as did Maitland, who also resembles him in other points, rather by force of genius than by any great attention to composition and style. This is how he defined his method:—

"Some people think that it is useful and proper for an historian to have preferences, ruling ideas, superior conceptions. This, they say, gives more life and charm to his work; it is the salt that gives a relish to the insipidity of facts. To think in this way is to mistake the nature of history. History is not an art, it is a pure science. It does not consist in agreeable narratives or profound dissertations. It consists, as does every science, in verifying facts, in analyzing them, in comparing them, in marking the bonds that unite them. . . . The historian has no other ambition than that of seeing facts clearly and understanding them exactly. It is not in his imagination or his logic that he looks for them; he looks for them and finds them in the texts, just as a chemist finds his facts in careful and exact experiments. His sole skill consists in extracting from the documents all that they contain, and in refusing to add anything which they do not contain. The best historian is he who keeps closest to the texts, interprets them with most exactitude, and writes, and even thinks, in accordance with them."

BISMARCK is reported to have said that next to the Prussian army, it was the German professors of history who had done the most to create the new Germany under the hegemony of Prussia. And Professor Bury has pointed out that history, often crude and uncritical history, is one of the most effective weapons in the armories of men who are struggling to realize their nationality. It is one of the ironies of fortune that Fustel de Coulanges, who would have died rather than admit that his historical work was influenced by personal prepossessions, has been charged with bias in discussing the early relations of Gauls and Germans. He wrote, it is said, on the eve of the Franco-German War;

his place of residence at Strasburg was an outpost of France; and he certainly took up a strong patriotic line when war was declared. Whatever be the truth of these charges, Fustel de Coulanges was undoubtedly an opponent of the doctrine of force which was then preached in France as well as in Germany. "The empire of this world," wrote Taine in 1863, "belongs to force." The fundamental thesis of "The Ancient City," published a year later, is that material force plays but a small part in the organization of society and of institutions. It was religion that had shaped the civilization and determined the destinies of Greece and Rome, and Fustel de Coulanges drew from this the conclusion that it is ideas that rule, and that they will always rise superior to material revolutions or conquests. "History," he said, "does not study only material facts and institutions; its true object of study is the human soul; it should aspire to know what that soul has believed, has thought, has felt, in the different ages of the life of the human race."

THIS opposition to the doctrine of material force does not square exactly with some of the other theories of Fustel de Coulanges about history. History, he held, does not enable us to solve questions, it teaches us to examine. And Lord Morley confesses that history's direct lessons are few, its specific morals rare. As a rule, Fustel de Coulanges thought of himself as a sort of impassive and austere priest of science. "His words," says his biographer, M. Paul Guiraud, "possessed a geometrical rigor. It was the eloquence of the savant, indeed of the mathematician, abstract without being arid, sparing in images, and rich in formulae. The heart was not touched, the mind was not charmed; but the intelligence was utterly satisfied." Once, when addressing an enthusiastic audience, he felt that their admiration for his eloquence was some sort of reflection on his science. "Do not applaud me," he said, "it is not I that speak to you, but history that speaks by my mouth." He boasted that he was the only man who had studied every Latin text from the sixth century B.C. to the tenth century of the Christian era, and he was firmly convinced that such a process, when honestly carried out, left no room for error. "Rest assured," he told one of his pupils a few days before his death, "that what I have written in my book is the truth."

SINCE the death of Fustel de Coulanges, historians have debated whether his conception of history is sound, and whether a dispassionate and unbiassed account of the past is possible. For a time the scientific school seemed to have, if not the best of the argument, at any rate the weightiest advocates. But there has been a change of late. It was voiced by Mr. G. M. Trevelyan in a delightful essay, and I notice that Professor Morse Stephens, in his address as President of the American Historical Association, throws overboard the whole theory of impartial history. After twenty-eight years of study and thought on historical problems, he says, he has "come to realize more and more the futility of pretended impartiality; and at the last he has yielded to the conviction that the first duty of the historical scholar is to grasp the fact that his limitations as a human being must ever debar him, even if the most complete material lies ready to his hand, from attempting more than a personal interpretation of some part or period of the past." Here, then, is a judgment of history directly contrary to that of Fustel de Coulanges.

WE might let historians themselves settle this debate about history, if it had not an important bearing upon the whole world of books. For, whatever its merits, scientific history is not read by the ordinary man. When the books of the great Victorian historians appeared they had a direct and immediate influence on the popular mind. That influence is not shared by their successors. Most of us get such ideas of history or of philosophy as we possess from the lighter literature of our age, its novels and its plays. This is inevitable, because most of us read to be amused or entertained. History can do both, but only if it ceases to be scientific. It would, in return, have the influence that it had in the days of Macaulay and of John Richard Green. Even if we should continue to owe most to the novelists and the dramatists, a little steadying from other influences like history might, as Mr. Trevelyan observes, be a good leaven in modern gospels and movements.

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Reviews.

WORDSWORTH.

"William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence."
By GEORGE MCLEAN HARPER. (Murray. 2 vols. 24s. net.)

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH—whom Professor Harper pedestals as "the most delightful, the most fascinating woman who has enriched literary history"—once confessed in a letter about her brother William, that "his person is not in his favor," and that he was "certainly rather plain." He is the most difficult of all the great poets whom one reverences to portray as an attractive person. "'Horse-face,' I have heard satirists say," Carlyle wrote of him, recalling a comparison of Hazlitt's; and the horse-face seems to be symbolic of something which we find, not only in his personal appearance, but in his personality and his work. His faults do not soften us, as the faults of so many favorite writers do. They were faults, not of passion, but of a superior person, who was something of a Sir Willoughby Patterne in his pompous self-satisfaction. "He says," records Lamb in one of his letters, "he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakespeare, if he had a mind to try it." Lamb adds: "It is clear that nothing is wanting but the mind." Leigh Hunt, after receiving a visit from Wordsworth in 1815, remarked that "he was as sceptical on the merits of all kinds of poetry but one as Richardson was on those of the novels of Fielding." Keats, who had earlier spoken of the reverence in which he held Wordsworth, wrote to his brother in 1818: "I am sorry that Wordsworth has left a bad impression wherever he visited in town by his egotism, vanity, and bigotry." There was something frigidly unsympathetic in his judgment of others, which was as unattractive as his complacency in regard to his own work. When Trelawny, seeing him at Lausanne and learning who he was, went up to him as he was about to step into his carriage, to ask him what he thought of Shelley as a poet, he replied: "Nothing." Again, Wordsworth spoke with solemn reprobation of certain of Lamb's friendships, after Lamb was dead, as "the indulgences of social humors and fancies which were often injurious to himself and causes of severe regrets to his friends, without really benefiting the object of his misapplied kindness." Nor was this attitude of Johnny Head-in-Air the mark only of his later years. It appeared in the days when he and Coleridge collaborated in bringing out "Lyrical Ballads." There is something sublimely egotistical in the way in which he shook his head over "The Ancient Mariner" as a drag upon that miraculous volume. In the course of a letter to his publisher, he wrote:—

"From what I can gather it seems that 'The Ancient Mariner' has, on the whole, been an injury to the volume; I mean that the old words and the strangeness of it have deterred readers from going on. If the volume should come to a second edition, I would put in its place some little things which would be more likely to suit the common taste."

It is when one reads sentences like these that one begins to take a mischievous delight in the later onslaught of a Scottish reviewer who, indignant that Wordsworth should dare to pretend to be able to appreciate Burns, denounced him as "a retired, pensive, egotistical, collector of stamps," and as—

"a melancholy, sighing, half-parson sort of gentleman, who lives in a small circle of old maids and sonneteers, and drinks tea now and then with the solemn Laureate."

One feels at times, indeed, that no ridicule or abuse of this stiff-necked old fraud could be excessive; for, if he were not Wordsworth, as what but a fraud could we picture him in his later years, as he protests against Catholic Emancipation, the extension of the franchise, the freedom of the Press, and popular education? "Can it, in a general view," he asks, "be good that an infant should learn much which its parents do not know? Will not a child arrogate a superiority unfavorable to love and obedience?" He shuddered again at the likelihood that Mechanics' Institutes would "make discontented spirits and insubordinate and presumptuous workmen." He opposed the admission of Dissenters to Cambridge University, and he

"desired that a medical education should be kept beyond the reach of a poor student," on the ground that "the better able the parents are to incur expense, the stronger pledge have we of their children being above meanness and unfeeling and sordid habits." One might go on quoting instance after instance of this piety of success, as it might be called, from Professor Harper's volumes. Time and again the words seem to come from the mouth, not of one of the inspired men of the modern world, but of some puffed-up elderly gentleman in a novel by Jane Austen. His letter to a young relation who wished to marry his daughter Dora is a letter which Jane Austen might have invented at her best:—

"If you have thoughts of marrying, do look out for some lady with a sufficient fortune for both of you. What I say to you now I would recommend to every naval officer and clergyman who is without prospect of professional advancement. Ladies of some fortune are as easily won as those without, and for the most part as deserving. Check the first liking to those who have nothing."

One is tempted to say that Wordsworth, like so many other poets, died young, and that a pensioner who inherited his name survived him.

When one has told the worst about Wordsworth, however, one is as far as ever from having painted a portrait of him in which anybody could believe while reading the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality"—"Ode" as it was simply called when it was first published—or "I wandered lonely as a cloud," or the sonnet composed on Westminster Bridge. Nor does the portrait of a stern, unbending egotist satisfy us when we remember the life-long devotion which existed between him and Dorothy, and the fact that Coleridge loved him, and that Lamb and Scott were his friends. He may have been a niggard of warm-heartedness to the outside world, but it is clear from his biography that he possessed the genius of a good heart as well as of a great mind. It is Professor Harper's object to paint Wordsworth in terms of his goodness and greatness rather than of his littleness, and for this reason he emphasizes more than any other biographer the early Wordsworth who rejoiced in the French Revolution, and, apparently as a consequence, initiated a revolution in English poetry. The later period of the life is not glossed over; it is given, indeed, in cruel detail, and Professor Harper's account of it is the most lively and fascinating part of his admirable book. But it is to the heart of the young revolutionary, who dreamed of becoming a Girondist leader and of seeing England a republic, that he traces all the genius and understanding that we find in the poems. "Wordsworth's connection," he writes, "with the English 'Jacobins,' with the most extreme element opposed to the war or actively agitating in favor of making England a republic, was much closer than has been generally admitted." He points out that Wordsworth's first books of verse, "An Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches," were published by Joseph Johnson, who also published Dr. Priestley, Horne Tooke, and Mary Wollstonecraft, and whose shop was frequented by Godwin and Paine. Professor Harper attempts to strengthen his case by giving brief sketches of famous "Jacobins," whom Wordsworth may or may not have met, but his case is strong enough without their help. Wordsworth's reply—not published at the time, or, indeed, till after his death—to the Bishop of Llandaff's anti-French-Revolution sermon on "The Wisdom and Goodness of God in having made both Rich and Poor," was signed without qualification, "By a Republican." He refused in this to join in "the idle cry of modish lamentation" over the execution of the French King, and defended the other executions in France as necessary. He condemned the hereditary principle, whether in the Monarchy or the House of Lords. The existence of a nobility, he held, "has a necessary tendency to dishonor labor." Had he published this pamphlet when it was written, in 1793, he might easily have found himself in prison, like many other sympathizers with the French. Wordsworth gives us an idea in "The Prelude"—how one wishes one had the original and unamended version of the poem as it was finished in 1805!—of the extreme lengths to which his Republican idealism carried him. When war was declared against France, he tells us, he prayed for French victories, and—

"Exulted in the triumph of my soul,
When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,
Left without glory on the field, or driven,
Brave hearts! to shameful flight."

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Two years later we find him at Racedown planning satires against the King, the Prince of Wales, and various public men, one of the couplets on the King and the Duke of Norfolk running:—

"Heavens! who sees majesty in George's face?
Or looks at Norfolk, and can dream of grace?"

But these lines, he declared, were given to him by Southey. By 1797 a Government spy seems to have been looking after him and his friends: he was living at the time at Alfoxden, near Coleridge, who, in the previous year, had brought out "The Watchman" to proclaim, as the prospectus said, "the state of the political atmosphere, and preserve Freedom and her Friends from the attacks of Robbers and Assassins." Wordsworth at a later period did not like the story of the spy, but it is certain that about the time of the visit he got notice to quit Alfoxden, obviously for political reasons, from the lady who owned the estate. Professor Harper's originality as a biographer, however, does not lie in his narration of facts like these, but in the patience with which he traces the continuance of French sympathies in Wordsworth on into the opening years of the nineteenth century. He has altered the proportions in the Wordsworth legend, and made the youth of the poet as long in the telling as his age. This was all the more necessary because various biographers have followed too closely the example of the official "Life," the materials for which Wordsworth entrusted to his nephew, the Bishop, who naturally regarded Wordsworth, the pillar of Church and State, as a more eminent and laudable figure than Wordsworth, the young Revolutionary. Whether the Bishop deliberately hushed up the fact that, during his early travels in France, Wordsworth fell in love with an aristocratic French lady who bore him an illegitimate child, we do not know. Professor Harper, taking a more ruthless view of the duties of a biographer, now relates the story, though in a rather vague and mysterious way. One wishes that, having told us so much, he had told us a little more. Even with all we know about the early life of Wordsworth, however, we are still left guessing at his portrait rather than with a clear idea of it. He was a figure in his youth, a character in his old age. The character we know down to the roots of his hair. But the figure—what is its secret?

Its secret, so far as relates to poetry, is simple enough. It is the secret of a fresh vision—a vision bathing the world and its inhabitants in a strange and revolutionary light. Wordsworth was the first great poet of equality and fraternity in the sense that he portrayed the lives of common country people in their daily surroundings as faithfully as though they had been kings. It would be absurd to suggest that there are no anticipations of this democratic spirit in English literature from Chaucer down to Burns, but Wordsworth, more than any other English writer, deserves the credit of having emancipated the poor man into being a fit subject for noble poetry. How revolutionary a change this was it is difficult to realize at the present day, but Jeffrey's protest against it, quoted by Professor Harper from the "Edinburgh Review" of 1802, enables one to realize to what a degree the poor man was regarded as an outcast in literature when Wordsworth was young. In the course of an attack on "Lyrical Ballads" Jeffrey wrote:—

"The love, or grief, or indignation, of an enlightened and refined character is not only expressed in a different language, but is in itself a different emotion from the love, or grief, or anger, of a clown, a tradesman, or a market-wench. The things themselves are radically and obviously distinct. . . . The poor and vulgar may interest us, in poetry, by their situation; but never, we apprehend, by any sentiments that are peculiar to their condition, and still less by any language that is peculiar to it."

When we take sides with Wordsworth against Jeffrey on this matter it is not because we regard Wordsworth as a portrait-painter without faults. His portraits are marred in several cases by the intrusion of his own personality with its "My good man" and "My little man" air. His human beings have a way of becoming either lifeless or absurd when they talk. "The Leech-Gatherer" and "The Idiot Boy" are not the only poems of Wordsworth which are injured by the insertion of banal dialogue. It is as though there were, despite his passion for liberty, equality, and fraternity, a certain gaucherie in his relations with other human beings, and he were at his happiest as a solitary. His nature, we may grant, was of mixed aspects, but, even as early as the 1807 "Poems in Two Volumes"

had he not expressed his impatience of human society in a sonnet?—

"I am not one who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbors, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
"Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong."

With Wordsworth, indeed, the light of revelation did not fall upon men so unbrokenly as upon the face of the earth. He knew the birds of the countryside better than the old men, and the flowers far better than the children. He noticed how light plays like a spirit upon all living things. He heard every field and valley echoing with new songs. He saw the daffodils dancing by the lake, the green linnet dancing among the hazel leaves, and the young lambs bounding, as he says in an unexpected line, "as to the tabor's sound," and his heart danced to the same music, like the heart of a mystic caught up in holy rapture. Here rather than in men did he discover the divine speech. His vision of men was always troubled by his consciousness of duties. Nature came to him as a liberator into spiritual existence. Not that he ceased to be a philosopher in his reveries. He was never the half-sensual kind of mystic. He was never a sensualist in anything, indeed. It seems to us to be significant that he had little sense of smell—the most sensual of the senses. It is, perhaps, because of this that he is comparatively so roseless a poet. But what an ear he had, what a harvesting eye! One cannot read "The Prelude" or "The Ode" or "Tintern Abbey" without feeling that seldom can there have been a poet who grew up with a more exquisite capacity for the enjoyment of delightful things. One has a feeling that in his profounder moments he reaches the very sources of joy as few poets have done. He attracts many readers like a prospect of cleansing and healing streams. And he succeeds in being a great poet in two manners. He is a great poet in the grand tradition of English literature, and he is a great poet in his revolutionary simplicity. "The Idiot Boy," for all its banalities, is as immortal as "The Ode," and "The Solitary Reaper" will live side by side with the great sonnets while the love of literature endures. While we read these poems we tell ourselves that it is almost irrelevant to mourn the fact that the man who wrote them gave up his faith in humanity for faith in Church and State. His genius survives in literature: it was only his courage as a politician that perished. At the same time, he wished to impress himself upon the world as a politician as well as a poet, and even observed in his old age that "he had given twelve hours' thought to the condition of society for one to poetry." And, indeed, if he had died at the age at which Byron died, his record in politics would have been as noble as his record in poetry. Happily or unhappily, however, he lived on, a worse politician and a worse poet. His record as both has never before been set forth with the same comprehensiveness as in Professor Harper's important and, after one has ploughed through some heavy pages, fascinating volumes.

FRENCH POETS OF YESTERDAY.

"Six French Poets: Studies in Contemporary Literature."
By AMY LOWELL. (Macmillan. 10s. 6d. net.)

A BIRD'S-EYE view of French poetry during the last century and a-half presents a more regular outline and clearer groups than that of any other European country. From movement to movement and from group to group its evolution has been orderly and its progress in something like a pre-determined direction. "Incessu patuit Deus," even though at some stages the gait was a thought too hurried for perfect dignity. Classicism exploded into Romanticism, Romanticism crystallized into Parnassianism, Parnassianism dissolved into Symbolism, and Symbolism, after emerging from Decadence and showing signs of fissiparous tendencies, seemed about to harden into something very like a renovated Classicism when the war came and set up an interregnum in the intellectual development of Europe.



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Whether this sequence springs from something that is social and orderly in the structure of the French mind, or whether it is the illusion of criticism in the search for general ideas, and would dissolve upon closer examination, are debatable questions. It is at least true that lonely independence is not an attitude beloved of the French genius, and that in ranging themselves under a flag and a cry, French poets have made the task easier for their critics, as well as modified the work which they themselves would have produced under other conditions. For if a man regards himself as a Symbolist, as one of a group with similar ideals, his production will differ from what it would have been had he recognized no such allegiance.

Yet it is not easy to find a common label for the six poets—Verhaeren, Albert Samain, Remy de Gourmont, Henri de Régnier, Francis Jammes, and Paul Fort—included in Miss Lowell's volume. All of them belong to the generation immediately following that of Verlaine and Mallarmé. "They are," she says, "men of middle age and undisputed fame, and, were French taught as it ought to be, their names would be household words with us as they are in their native land." To this we are inclined to demur. Verhaeren, sometimes Symbolist or mystic, sometimes realist, but always powerful, is a Belgian, and if he is a master of the privileges of the French tongue, he cannot enter into all its prejudices. He remains for all purposes of classification a Belgian poet "d'expression française." Of the others, Remy de Gourmont won his distinction more as a thinker than as an artist, and as a critic and writer of prose than a poet. Albert Samain and Francis Jammes are writers of charming and graceful talent, whose names are familiar to a group who think of poetic art as one of the main affairs of life, but they certainly are not "household words," even in their native land.

There remain Henri de Régnier and Paul Fort—the latter the "Prince of Poets" and the former a member of the French Academy. This achievement of M. de Régnier seems to have a disturbing effect on Miss Lowell's criticism, possibly because he is the only one of her selected half-dozen who can boast of the distinction. He is, she observes, "one of the Immortals," "one of the greatest poets and novelists his country has known," the equal of Hugo, Balzac, and Flaubert, "such a novelist as there can be only a dozen or so in any nation's history." M. de Régnier is a considerable novelist, but he does not merit this eulogy. A sympathetic understanding of the eighteenth century, a gift for rendering transient and elusive emotional states, and a measured and sonorous style give him high rank among his contemporaries, but do not set him on the pinnacle to which Miss Lowell would elevate him. His real claim to distinction is his verse. He possesses, perhaps to a greater degree than any member of his school, the power of painting the external world in such a manner as to evoke the complex moods of melancholy and luxuriance, of languid aspiration towards some land of heart's desire, at once mystic and sensuous, dimly conceived as hidden behind the veil of Nature, which seems to obsess every Symbolist. Naiads and fountains, marble staircases and gorgeous colors, pass in procession through his pages. "He lives," wrote Remy de Gourmont, "in an old Italian palace where emblems and figures are written on the walls. He dreams, passing from room to room; towards evening he descends the marble staircase and wanders about the gardens, which are paved like courts, to dream among basins and fountains, while the black swans seek their nests, and a peacock, solitary as a king, seems to drink superbly of the dying pride of a golden twilight."

For him Nature is a background, or rather a symbol of his own sadness, though he finds a sort of voluptuous pleasure in the colors and forms that Nature shows him. Here, for example, is a stanza from the poem called "Quelqu'un Songe d'Aube et d'Ombre":—

"J'ai cru voir ma tristesse—dit-il—et je l'ai vue
—Dit-il plus bas—
Elle était nue,
Assise dans la grotte la plus silencieuse
De mes intérieures pensées;
Elle y était le songe morne des eaux glacées,
L'anxiété des stalactites anxieuses,
Le poids des rocs lourds comme le temps,
Le douleur des porphyres rouges comme le sang;
Assise au fond de mon silence
Et nue ainsi que s'apparaît ce qui se pense."

M. Paul Fort has more originality and more vitality than any other living French poet, and his work is correspondingly difficult to classify. "Prose, rhythmic prose, and verse," he claims, "are only a single instrument, graduated,"; and he prints his verse as if it were prose, without any typographical device to distinguish the lines. He had written some sixteen volumes in this style before the war, of which one can only say that they are all bubblingly alive and bear the imprint of a personality as attractive as it is original. He flows like a mountain stream on a bright spring morning. He is, perhaps, at his best in such simple songs as "La Ronde":—

"Si toutes les filles du monde voulaient s'donner la main, tout autour de la mer elles pourraient faire une ronde.

"Si tous les gars du monde voulaient bien être marins, ils feraient avec leurs barques un joli pont sur l'onde.

"Alors on pourrait faire une ronde autour du monde, si tous les gens du monde voulaient s'donner la main."

Since the outbreak of the war M. Fort has been publishing a series of "Poèmes de France" that are amazingly vivid and powerful, though disconcerting in their audacities of form and sudden transitions from the solemn to the trivial. Nobody denies M. Fort's gifts, yet, for some reason or other, nobody seems satisfied that he has turned them to the best advantage.

THE ETHICS OF WAR.

"Through the War to the Kingdom." By the Rev. E. SHILLITO. (Morgan & Scott. 2s. net.)

"Religion and the War." By F. R. BARRY. (Methuen. 1s. net.)

"War from a Quaker Point of View." By JOHN W. GRAHAM. (Headley. 1s. 6d. net.)

"Towards Ultimate Unity: Report of a Conference on the Pacifist Philosophy of Life at Caxton Hall." (League of Peace and Freedom. 1s. net.)

THE first two of these books embody the reflections of average religious thought on the war: Mr. Shillito representing the more popular, Mr. Barry the more academic, standpoint. The latter gives us one very good story, reproducing the motto of a valentine sent by the "Cambridge Review" to the famous Krupp firm:—"Das Reich Gottes ist nicht Essen, sondern . . . Friede," and reminds us that "it is unsafe to assume that the men who have seen God face to face in Flanders will necessarily begin 'going to church' when they come back." This will depend on what they find there; it may be that they will insist on a very different kind of Christianity to that which the churches supply. We sincerely hope that they will. The book is thoughtful throughout, and will repay reading; but the Quaker and Pacifist tendencies for which Mr. Graham and the Caxton Hall Conference stand are, if narrower, more tangible than those either of Oriol or the Free Churches; more definite views and more precise points are raised.

There are points of view which, while in themselves one-sided and misleading, it is desirable to see represented in the Press and even in Parliament. Taken in conjunction with, and as a check upon, popular and other slipshod thinking, they have their uses; from a compromise between two extreme, and, as they stand, untenable opinions, an approximation to an accurate conception of the subject-matter may be obtained. This is shown by the positions both of Mr. Graham and of Mr. Bertrand Russell, whose paper on the "Philosophy of Pacifism" is typical of the Caxton Hall Conference. The title, both of the Conference and of the League under the auspices of which it was held, is what Bentham called "question begging." It may be doubted whether Pacifism has produced a Philosophy; and whether the League is calculated to promote either Freedom or Peace. But the papers read by the Leaguers, that contributed in particular by Mr. Russell, contain much that is excellent, much that is timely, and much that is unseasonable and perverse.

Mr. Graham recognizes the strain put upon the traditional Quaker teaching by such an emergency as the present war. "It is never wise to enclose a positive precept

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DELOITTE, PLENDER, GRIFFITHS & Co., Chartered Accountants.

in the form of a negative proposition," he says wisely; and he quotes Miss Stephens's "Quaker Strongholds" with approval:—

"To abstain from all participation in warfare is surely a quite different thing from laying down any general theory as to the 'unlawfulness' of war. I own that it does not appear to me to be right or wise to blame those who are acting in obedience to their own views of duty, however much they may differ from our own. I do not think it can serve any good purpose to ignore the force of the considerations by which war appears to many people to be justified. I would myself even go further, and admit that, under all the complicated conditions of the world (including historical facts and treaty obligations), there are cases in which men may be actually bound to fight in what they believe to be a just cause; although it does not, I believe, follow that every individual would be justified in taking part in such warfare."

Such doubts have been accentuated by the events of the last fourteen months: "There are no Quakers in Belgium; but, if there had been any, what (asks Mr. Graham) would they have done last autumn? Some, if we may judge from English action, would have fought with the rest—some also would have made in Christ's name no resistance whatever; the remainder would have taken service with the State in helpful and necessary ways, not implying a personal share in killing. Temperament and variety of conviction would have led to varying responses to the tragic issue." This is the language of a man firm in his own convictions, though tolerant to those of others. But the traditional Quaker position has been left behind.

The distinction between nationality and empire may be noticed. The nation is, practically, indestructible; but "the hasty aggregation into empires has turned out to be a false step made over and over again in all parts of the world. Never has an empire remained finally stable. It lies with this British Empire to become an empire only in name, in spirit a confederacy of autonomous nations, or it will follow in the wake of its long succession of failures, without evolutionary value." These are wise and seasonable words. Mr. Graham is less successful when he argues that the historical Quaker position is consistent in sanctioning a judicial force and a system of criminal law. The language of the New Testament which forbids resistance to evil does not discriminate. Rather, if we take it literally, it bids us follow the example of the saintly Monseigneur Myriel in Victor Hugo's romance. There is little, however, in Mr. Graham's book to which the English citizen will take exception. It is otherwise with Mr. Russell's paper. Mr. Russell endorses President Wilson's maxim, that there is such a thing as a nation's being too proud to fight. "Love of peace," he tells us, "is promoted by a nation which, like America at the present moment, refrains from fighting, in spite of what is conventionally an unimpeachable *casus belli*, and in spite of almost complete immunity from the risk of defeat." This policy, which is particularist rather than universal, if it reflects more than the idiosyncrasies of an administration, appears to most of us to show an ominous fissure in the nation, and an incapacity for united action which augurs ill for its future. And when it is added that "the only things worth fighting for are things of the spirit," and that "if men could be brought to see how much of the evils suffered by an invaded country are due to the resistance offered to invasion . . . it is possible that something of the fear which leads to war might be allayed, and that a link might be broken in the tragic chain of violence which is forged by the supposed duty of self-defence"; that "passive resistance would discourage the use of force by arousing a sense of shame in the aggressive nation"; and, finally, that, in the event of invasion, "the expedition would not be in the state of mingled fear and ferocity which characterizes an invading army engaged in quelling armed resistance; discipline would be easily preserved, and atrocities would be few," we can but reflect that, if it is desirable, as Plato held, that kings should be philosophers, it is in the highest degree undesirable that philosophers should be kings. Human nature in the rough is something very different from human nature as seen through the spectacles of a professor; and, *natura nihil facit per saltum*. We cannot anticipate a contingent future, or act from what may be the standpoint of to-morrow to-day.

F.

FOR POPULAR CONSUMPTION.

"Tasker Jevons: The Real Story." By MAY SINCLAIR. (Hutchinson. 6s.)

THERE are leading ideas on which novels are based, ideas that, however promising, do not "come off" in the working out, no matter what amount of ingenuity a clever writer may lavish on them. In such cases, few novelists have the courage to face the fact, and scrap their manuscript boldly. What Miss Sinclair ought to have done with "Tasker Jevons" is obvious. She should have cut her long novel down to a short story. By concentrating her drama into a few brilliant scenes she would have appealed to our imagination, but, as it is, her lengthy, meticulous chronicle of the blazing career of her scrubby little literary genius, Tasker Jevons, and his social contest with his wife's family, the Thesigers, lets out how patchy and scrappy her material is. Tasker Jevons himself is a psychological invention; he may be, and probably is, compounded of two men and a leading "idea," but the graft has not "taken." And the author's failure to show what precisely is in the man, whether he is more than clever, and what his genius is worth, apart from his market-place success, is emphasized by the niggling method of her feminine chronicle. Feminine, though the chronicler, Furnival, through whose perceptions and reflections the whole story comes, is a man! We have seen too much of late years of this method—which we fancy Mr. Henry James was the first to popularize—of one of the actors in the story serving as chronicler to the whole troupe of characters, and complacently chewing over the cud of his memories for our benefit. And Furnival's attitude to "the boulder," Tasker Jevons, who cuts him out and marries the girl he is in love with, Viola Thesiger, while she is in revolt against the dull seaminess of her family's surroundings, is oddly feminine. So is his sharp-eyed interest in details, his recognition of what A and B are "feeling," his delight in guessing at the inwardness of a situation, his quickness in getting hold of threads and making personal deductions. The author might have strengthened the verisimilitude of her story had she boldly grasped her nettle and let one of the Thesiger women comment and confide, speculate over, and describe all the circumstances of Viola's compromising visit to Belgium with the "impossible" Tasker, the shattering blow to the Canon's and Mrs. Thesiger's social gods, and Reggie, the military brother's anger. Miss Sinclair gets out of her depths when Tasker and Furnival, the Canon and Reggie, are brought face to face, and have to speak in person. The men are, in fact, only profiles reflected in the glass of a clever woman's imagination; and the best passages, such as the family meeting at Canterbury, when Canon Thesiger succumbs to his "impossible" son-in-law's adroitness, are so obviously the fruit of a watching, feminine eye, that one entirely forgets it is a man who is reporting them.

In Book II. the leading idea branches into a study of the effect on Tasker and his wife of his amazing success and prosperity as a popular novelist and dramatist. We are told some staggering things about Tasker's methods—viz., "as an engineer of literature he was inexhaustible. He had so perfected his machinery that the turning out of novels and of plays had become with him a sort of automatic habit. . . . I know that in nineteen-twelve he brought out two novels and two new plays that ran at the same time, and that he roped in Europe and the colonies, and that his income rose into five figures. He couldn't help it. . . ." And then Tasker Jevons took to dropping his aitches! We are told that the years were marked by "the awful increase in his solecisms. Their number, their enormity and frequency, rose with his income. . . . He was no longer on his guard. He had no longer any need to be." So Tasker breaks out in a hideous rash of material vulgarity, builds himself a house in Mayfair, with a Tudor hall, with shields and Tudor roses picked out in scarlet and gold, and the lilies of France in gold on tapestry cloth, and a superlatively vulgar drawing-room where every style is mixed. The effect on his wife is so disastrous that he has to let the Mayfair house to an American millionaire and moves into a country house, Amerscott Old Grange, "the most perfect specimen of a Queen Anne house you could wish to see." And at Amerscott the taint of Tasker's vulgarity grows so rank, when he has brought the country families round to accept him,

HARRODS STORES LTD.

THE 26th Annual General Meeting of this Company was held on February 29th, at the Company's Premises, Brompton Road, S.W. Sir Alfred J. Newton, Bart., presided, and in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said the insurance stood at £11,133, an increase of £2,286, mainly attributable to the cost of insuring against air risks. Rents, rates, taxes, &c., stood at £54,060, an increase of £5,018. Salaries, wages, commissions, &c., amounted to £318,287, a reduction of £11,677. The general wages of the staff were increased by the sum of £6,323, but the reduction of payments to managers and buyers from Sir Richard Burbidge downward amounted to £18,000, which accounted for a reduction under this heading of £11,677.

On the other side of the accounts, the gross profit on trading, manufacturing, and miscellaneous accounts stood at £771,402, a decrease of £102,111. Rents received were down by £2,490, mainly accounted for by increased rates and taxes. The interest on investments, including a final dividend on the Ordinary shares of Dickins & Jones, amounted to £11,542, being down by £9,891. In the balance-sheet deposits and current account balances stood at £754,000, a decrease of £69,000, and to sundry creditors they owed £316,136, an increase of £58,000. Credit balances stood at £501,030, an increase of £43,887. Stocks on hand amounted to £607,472, being less by £24,803, and the cash at bankers was £132,000, a decline of £71,000. Their trading profits in 1914-15 last year were helped by the War Office contract. They believed their services in that respect were of some value to the authorities during a time of great pressure. Since then, however, the Government had decided to confine their orders to purely wholesale houses. He had good reason to believe that at the present time many of the Government departments were placing their orders with great discrimination and on the best terms, and were, in fact, keen buyers. Whether the house of Harrods could not have done just as well it was not, perhaps, for him to say, but personally he had no doubt at all that they could.

The dividend from Dickins & Jones, which last year was £23,000, was this year £13,321. That was a striking evidence from the financial view of the dire effects commercially of the war. The large decrease in the net profits of Harrods was also partly accounted for by the fact that last year there was no season trade. There had been a wave of economy and a constant upward trend in prices of all articles, which made business particularly difficult. They had also had to contend against large and unavoidable increases in expenses. To give but one example, the cost of transport and delivery had very largely increased; higher wages to motor drivers, packers, and porters, as well as increased cost of petrol, tires, and repairs, accounted for an increase of between £4,000 and £5,000 in that department alone. Again, stationery, packing paper, string, and such like, of which very large quantities were used, had enormously increased in price. Now that the days were lengthening, they were returning to the ordinary hours of business, keeping the stores open until 6 o'clock instead of 5 o'clock, as had been the practice for the past three months. They believed that during the season the arrangement of closing early on account of the darkened streets had been of great benefit to both customers and many of the staff, but there was no reason for a further continuance now that the evenings were getting lighter. They regretted that owing to increased railway and postal charges it was impossible to continue sending all goods carriage free, irrespective of value. In future carriage would only be paid on parcels to the value of 10s. or over, except in the case of drapery goods, which would be sent carriage free, irrespective of their value. It had been found necessary to bring this regulation into force as from March 1st, on account of the increased postal and railway rates, and they felt convinced that former customers would quite appreciate the necessity for this action.

Sir Richard Burbidge, Bart., said he was sorry to see a diminution in the profits, especially as this was the twenty-fifth year of his connexion with the business. This was the first year there had been a diminution, and it was entirely owing to the war. With regard to the current year, he was very optimistic, and he felt certain they would overcome the difficulties that faced them and present a much better balance-sheet at the next meeting.

The report and accounts were adopted.

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NOTE TO ADVERTISERS.

*We desire to express our regrets to the
Advertisers whose announcements we are
compelled to omit this week.*

that poor Viola frankly gives up his manners as a bad job, and a strong and secret revulsion throws her back to the Thesiger traditions. The idea is a good one, as is the sequel that Viola cannot stand her husband any longer and runs away from him, tortured by the unbearable fact that the man she loves is not only a bounder but a snob. But Miss Sinclair only devotes a meagre thirty pages to this situation, one which deserves subtle and detailed handling, and then she plunges us straightway into the European conflagration. And in Book III. we rush off after Tasker and his motor ambulance to Belgium, and follow his trailing cloud of glory to Antwerp and Termonde and Melle, where we and the Thesigers are all in the thick of it as special correspondents, with wounded English officers, and stretcher-bearers, under shell-fire from the German batteries. This section of the novel, with its crowning description of the heroic Tasker carrying three wounded men out of the blazing Town Hall of Melle, the last of whom is Major Reggie Thesiger, it is superfluous to criticize. No doubt the story had to be wound up by a solution that reconciles Viola and her family to her husband, and her husband to us, and what could be neater or more appropriate than the patriotic solution? Perhaps there is a symbolical meaning underlying the tale of Tasker Jevons's career, for we notice that the sub-title is wittily designated "The Real Story."

The Week in the City.

DURING this week gilt-edged stocks have been heavy under fears of further stiff taxation and increasing debt issues. The failure of Associated Portland Cement to pay a dividend on its Preference is a gloomy portent. Mr. McKenna's cheerful tone and his expression of confidence that the nation will be able to finance the war without much difficulty for another year afford no consolation to the purely financial mind; for if only two-thirds of the war cost is to be raised by loan, that, after all, means a monthly addition of over a hundred millions sterling to the National Debt, and an interest charge of five millions sterling to be met out of taxes after the war. People are settling down to the idea of a 5s. income-tax, which means, I suppose, that most of those who are living on fixed incomes will have to move into smaller houses. It was mentioned the other day that in one well-known district of a southern county all except two of the larger country houses were to let or for sale. In London, so far, the luxury shops, and especially Bond Street, have suffered most, but large houses are evidently a drug in the market. Probably thousands of them will be divided up into maisonettes and flats. This will be an interesting feature of life after the war. Anyone who looks at "Country Life" will see from its advertisements that "War Bargains" are becoming a feature. No doubt many families will choose to migrate owing to the loss of their sons at the Front. The meeting of the Chambers of Commerce was chiefly remarkable for the collapse of the purely Protectionist resolution and its replacement by a Protectionist resolution substituting "Empire" for "Nation." The meeting was, as usual, packed with cranks and Fair Traders of all varieties, and has no more significance than it had in the older Protectionist revivals which were led respectively by Lord

Randolph Churchill, Sir Howard Vincent, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. On the other hand, the speeches of Mr. McKenna and Mr. Bonar Law seem to signify some arrangement with the Allies for boycotting German goods. If so, the City will suffer severely, for it makes enormous profits, like Manchester and Bradford, out of Anglo-German trade and finance. Another serious fact for British trade is that the Indian tariff has been raised and extended, though not to include Lancashire cotton goods.

THE UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC REPORT.

The Underground Electric Railways Co., of London, is the holding concern of the four underground railways, with which I dealt briefly last week, the London General Omnibus Co., and various other associated enterprises. The pooling arrangement between the four railways and the Omnibus Company does not affect the income of the Underground Company, although the report for 1915 naturally shows some variation in the amount received from the various investments:—

	1914.	1915.	+ Inc. or - dec.
	£	£	£
City and South London ...	9,900	14,800	+ 4,900
London Electric ...	95,200	143,200	+ 48,000
Metropolitan District ...	30,100	41,000	+ 10,900
London General Omnibus ...	256,100	192,100	- 64,000
Associated Equipment ...	170,000	170,000	—
Union Surplus Lands ...	nil	5,300	+ 5,300
London and Sub. Traction ...	10,500	6,600	- 3,900

The total revenue amounted to £680,700, as compared with £684,600 for 1914. Charges against revenue have, however, advanced from £646,200 to £680,600, owing to the larger amount required to pay the interest on notes and bonds. The interest on the Income Bonds is paid free of income-tax, which alone is responsible for an increase of £27,200. A larger sum is also payable on the Four-and-a-Half per Cent. Three-Year Notes. Payment under the guarantee on Central London Stocks however, requires £10,000 less. The amount carried forward is increased by £100 to £38,600. The company's holdings, the nominal value of which is £19,294,040, stand in the books at £14,521,600. The Six per Cent. Income Bonds give a return, at the present quotation, of just over 7 per cent.

THE RUBBER MARKET.

The Rubber Market is still almost the busiest department of the Stock Exchange, and the demand for shares on the part of the investing public is well maintained. Stocks of the commodity in London are limited, and as America has again started buying on a large scale and Russia is expected to come into the market with the reopening of Archangel next month, there is little likelihood of any serious fall in the price of the raw material. There was some profit-taking in the Share Market last week, but prices gave way but very little, and have again started on a fresh advance. A few of the early spring dividends have already made their appearance, and are all quite up to expectations. A large number of the younger companies are bringing forward substantial amounts of rubber this year, and some of them have made contracts at good prices in advance. The demand, although principally for the lower-priced shares, has not been confined to those descriptions. The Trust companies, which in the past have mostly adopted the policy of selling their high-priced shares and replacing them with others in concerns which had not, at the time of their acquisition, reached the producing stage, are now coming in for a good deal of attention.

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PRUDENTIAL ASSURANCE CO. LTD.

THE Sixty-seventh Annual General Meeting of this Company was held on the 2nd inst. at Holborn Bars, E.C.

Mr. Thomas C. Dewey, the Chairman of the Company, presided, and, in moving the adoption of the Report and Accounts, said:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—We met last year under the shadow of the terrible conflict which is still devastating the wealth and happiness of nations, and we meet again with one thought still uppermost in our hearts and minds—a thought which has, however, in the interval ripened into full conviction—that, fearful though the sacrifices which we are called upon to make maybe, there is no limit to the suffering which we would cheerfully endure rather than submit to an inconclusive peace.

It is certainly evident that the preparations unceasingly made by Germany for forty years, in order that she might assert her mastery throughout Europe, had given her an enormous advantage over her peace-loving neighbours, but her disregard of all those amenities by which civilisation has sought to alleviate the horrors of war, her sheer brutality and barbarism, have effectively kindled the spirit of the Allied Nations and caused them to employ unitedly, and to the exclusion of all other considerations, the full extent of their greater resources for the organization of victory.

Signs are not wanting that, great as is the strength of Germany, the grip which our Grand Fleet has imposed upon her imports and exports, coupled with the fact that nearly all her foreign securities have been exhausted, has seriously impaired her ability to pay for such imports as she can secure and which she so greatly needs.

Paper currency may solve internal difficulties for a time, but the continuous fall in the value of German exchanges is a sure indication that an economic crisis cannot be indefinitely postponed, and her situation is made increasing difficult by the necessity which she is under of supporting her Allies, whose financial position is even more precarious than her own.

Sustained by the justice of our cause, we look forward with confidence to the time when our forces by land, by sea, and by air, together with those of our invincible Allies, will win the final and crushing victory over the Hun and destroy for ever the evil dream of Prussian domination.

Let me now direct your attention to the first page of the Report. The figures there shown would have been amazing if the year 1915 had been a year of peace, but when we consider the number of unusual calls upon us all, together with increased taxation and greatly increased cost of living, the figures I am about to quote will show what astonishing results our Company has produced.

The total assets, as shown by the balance-sheet, are £94,794,798, being an increase of £3,592,454 over last year.

The total income of the Company during the past year was £17,831,590, an increase of £635,502 over that of the previous year, and of £1,263,981 over that for 1913. Of this amount £3,677,559 came from interest and dividends and £13,672,644 from premiums. The interest and dividends were £107,666 in excess of those for 1914.

It is, however, to the increase in the premiums received in the Industrial Branch I would direct your attention. In 1914 the premiums received amounted to £8,176,202, an increase of £301,746, and I then told you that in a normal year with fifty-two collecting weeks we had never before had so great an increase. In 1915 the premiums received amounted to no less than £8,506,063, which is an increase of £329,861. That is to say, in spite of the country being engaged in hostilities for the whole of the twelve months, we have again secured a record premium increase.

The number of Industrial policies in force has been increased during the past year by 774,877 to 20,859,887, assuring £276,402,265, exclusive of bonus. The average duration of these policies exceeds thirteen years. When it is remembered how many of these policies have only been recently effected, it is, I think, a wonderful thing to be able to say that our efforts to prevent wasteful lapsing have succeeded to such an extent, that nearly twenty-one millions of policies have an average duration of over thirteen years.

The premiums receivable in respect of these policies amount to £171,755 per week, or £9,862 more than in the previous year. This is an increase in the weekly premiums that has never been approached in the history of the Company.

In the Ordinary Branch the number of policies issued was 68,785, assuring £6,619,218, and producing a new annual premium income of £457,217. This is an increase of 3,034 in the number of policies, £300,375 in the sums assured, and £32,864 in new premiums over the new business for 1914. Our business in policies for £500 and upwards still continues to increase, and during last year exceeded £1,100,000 in new assurances. The premiums received in the Ordinary Branch during the year were £5,157,516, being an increase of £121,891 over the year 1914. The total sum assured under the 935,514 policies in force at the end of the year was £104,336,208.

The claims in both Branches for the year have been very heavy, amounting in all to £8,269,363, of which more than £5,000,000 was due to claims by death. The war claims for the year amounted to £571,035: these claims were on comparatively young lives and, in consequence, involved a heavy loss. In addition, quite apart from the war claims, the mortality amongst the general population was heavy for a considerable portion of the year. As the Prudential policy-holders are representative of the whole of the Kingdom, heavier claims on the Company

are always coincident with an increased death-rate among the general population. Whilst I believe that an improvement in the mortality among the civilian population may be expected, there is, unfortunately, only too much reason to fear that the war claims will be heavier rather than lighter during the current year.

You will remember that at the commencement of hostilities the Directors decided that no additional premium should be charged for the extra war risk on existing policies excepting for those on the lives of officers and men of the Regular Army, and that these assurances should be free up to £250. The value of this concession may be gauged by the fact that since the commencement of hostilities war claims exceeding three-quarters of a million pounds have been paid, or a weekly average of over 500 claims for about £10,000.

Of the amount paid £113,366 was due to Naval casualties, £627,750 to deaths in the Army, £19,534 to frightfulness, including that most inhuman of outrages, the sinking of the "Lusitania," and £2,815 to Zeppelin raids and the coast bombardments. So far as financial help can alleviate the suffering caused by the war, I may claim that the Prudential has worthily upheld its traditions.

The expense ratio has slightly increased in both branches. While an increased new business always tends to increase expenditure, the economy in working by concentrating our business into limited areas has more than counterbalanced this, and an appreciable reduction in the rate of expenditure would have been shown had it not been for the temporary clerical assistance it has been necessary to obtain on account of the very large number of our staff who have joined the colours. I may say that practically the whole cost of the temporary assistance represents additional expenditure.

You are probably aware, ladies and gentlemen, that from the commencement of the war, the Directors being anxious to encourage those members of the indoor and outdoor staffs who desired to enlist have paid them the difference between their official salaries and their service pay, in order that they might not suffer financially by reason of their patriotic response to the country's call.

Dealing with the subject of finance, the year we have just passed through will long remain notable, not only in the annals of the country, but in the records of the Prudential. If I may draw a parallel, the tremendous financial strain has been met both by the country and the Prudential by a mobilisation of resources without precedent.

The issue of a 4½ per cent. War Loan in July last, followed by the sale of 5 per cent. Exchequer Bonds, altered the whole standard of interest rates. The result was a further depreciation in the market value of all interest bearing securities, and although this depreciation has to some extent been disguised by the retention on the Stock Exchange of minimum prices, yet it would be idle to ignore its existence.

The question of this depreciation received the earnest attention of your Board, and in view of the fact that prices have not yet attained a stable basis, and free dealing on the Stock Exchange is not yet permitted in many groups of investments, it was decided to adopt the same course as last year, viz., to carry substantial amounts to Investment Reserve Funds rather than to further write down the value of our securities. We have accordingly added the sum of £600,000 to the Reserve Fund in the Ordinary Branch, bringing it to a total of £1,600,000, and £342,365 to the Reserve Fund in the Industrial Branch, which, after deducting £92,365 for realised losses on Conversion of Consols, brings that Investment Reserve Fund to £1,000,000.

In addition, we have carried £700,000 to a special contingency fund in the Ordinary Branch, which will be available to meet any emergency which may possibly arise. It is of interest to note that the total Reserve Funds and amounts carried over in both branches, which are available to meet the special conditions imposed by the war, amount to a total of over £4,100,000.

When it is remembered that during the six years preceding the war we wrote down our securities by over £5,000,000, you will realise how effectively we have made provision for the difficulties with which we have been faced.

This depreciation would be more serious if realisation of investments were necessary to meet liabilities; its importance is, however, very much minimised in the case of a Life Assurance Company, which is in the position of holding securities to meet liabilities, the great majority of which emerge only in the somewhat distant future. The depreciation has been most severe in what may be termed permanent securities, that is, securities which are not redeemable at any fixed date. We have, therefore, valued these on the stringent basis of their present saleable values. Securities for which quotations were available have been valued at their actual market prices. Where minimum prices existed they have been disregarded, and values placed on the securities considerably below those which we estimate could easily be realised in the open market. I am happy to say that our investment reserve funds in each branch are much more than sufficient to meet this depreciation.

In the case of terminable securities, we feel that a market valuation in such times as the present is not a true test of value. In the past we have purchased many securities, of which the capital value is definitely repayable at some future date. For these securities we have always established Sinking Funds sufficient to equalise the book values and redeemable values at maturity. So long as the interest is duly paid, so long as we have good reason to believe the capital will be paid, and so long as we do not have to realise, we maintain that such securities are quite as valuable assets of the Company as they were at the date of purchase.

With regard to the first two of these conditions, we are quite secure, having made ample provision to meet the case of any possible default in our small holding of enemy securities. With regard to the third condition, the possibility of having to realise securities, our position is unassailable. Apart from our normal excess of income over outgo and in addition to our large cash balance at the bank, we hold at present over £10,000,000 of securities maturing this year, of which £9,000,000 are British Government Treasury Bills.

In the past, we have put aside large sums to meet depreciation. Some have thought that the policy followed was too cautious, but time has justified the action of the Directors. This year we are reserving a very much larger proportion of our surplus, and it may again be urged that we are erring on the side of safety.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we stand at a crisis in the history of the country, no man can forecast the length of the war, no man can tell what the future will bring forth. It may happily prove that we have been over-cautious. If so, the surplus which is being withheld will help to increase future bonuses. On the other hand, if the war should continue, if increased strain should have to be borne, then I say to you it would not be just to the Company, it would not be fair to the shareholders, it would not be right to the policy-holders, for us to neglect any precaution to preserve the strength and reputation of the Company.

I said last year that the Prudential was prepared loyally to do its share in aiding the finances of the country. When I used these words, I had no idea how soon or in what manner we should be put to the test, but the following letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has kindly authorised its publication, affords one illustration of the fulfilment of our promise:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W., August 4th, 1915.

DEAR SIR,—I have to thank the Prudential Assurance Company on behalf of his Majesty's Government for the patriotic spirit they have shown in placing the whole of their American securities at the disposal of the Treasury at a fair and reasonable price. The transaction has been of considerable assistance in facilitating Exchange operations, and the greatest credit is due to the Company for its prompt action.—Yours very truly,
R. McKENNA.
G. E. MAY, Esq., Secretary,
Prudential Assurance Company.

You may be interested to hear a few details of the transaction. We recognised early last summer that steps would have to be taken to regulate the American Exchange, and accordingly intimated to the Government that we were prepared to place at their disposal all our holding of American securities. The offer was accepted, and the whole matter was carried out with remarkable rapidity.

It is our practice to detach the sheets of coupons from our bonds in order to facilitate the cashing of them as they fall due. These coupons had again to be attached to the bonds, and it is interesting to note that within a period of 48 hours over 44,000 bonds, of a nominal value of over £8,750,000, were checked, removed from our own strong rooms, had their sheets of coupons attached, and were despatched to the Bank of England.

Merely to state that we did this work in 48 hours may not seem very remarkable, but if I give you a few more particulars you will better appreciate what the work really was.

The actual bonds themselves made up six motor-bus loads. The adhesive paper used to affix the sheets of coupons to the bonds measured well over eight miles. A staff of about 100 was engaged until nearly midnight. The work was carried out under the personal supervision of the Directors, and when all was finished, the Bank of England informed us that everything had been found to be correct, except that a single coupon of the value of only a few shillings had in some unexplained manner apparently vanished.

The second transaction of note was our application for over £3,000,000 War Loan. This represents what is probably the largest subscription from any company (excluding Banking Companies) throughout the Kingdom. The conversion of our holdings of Consols and 3½ per Cent. War Loan brought our total holding of New War Loan to over £5,000,000.

Mainly as a result of these two transactions we increased our holding of British Government securities by nearly £12,000,000.

As a further matter of interest I may tell you that we have been enabled during the year to take advantage of the fluctuating rates of exchange and sell to neutral countries £1,200,000 of their own securities. This was not only of advantage to the Company, but aided national interests, as it brought back capital from abroad for investment in our own country.

I trust I shall not weary you, but I must now beg your attention to the Valuation Report. This report is always of exceptional interest, but this year is of special importance. The valuation has been made on the same stringent basis as in previous years.

In the Ordinary Branch the surplus disclosed is £1,519,331, which is £275,622 less than last year. The reasons for this reduction are either directly or indirectly connected with the war. The main sources of profit on life assurance business are (1) favourable mortality, (2) interest earned in excess of the rate assumed in the valuation, (3) saving in expenses. The war has had the effect of decreasing all three sources of profit.

Our mortality experience this year has been increased owing to the payment of £145,536 on war claims in this Branch. The rate of interest earned in 1915, after deduction of income-tax, was £3 19s. 6d., as against £4 3s. 10d. in 1914. The reduction is almost entirely due to the increased income-tax to which we have been subjected. The third source of profit, viz., saving in

expenses, is also less this year owing to the causes to which I have already referred.

A very grave problem faced the Directors as to how the surplus should be dealt with, and eventually it was decided we should not be justified in making any general distribution of surplus at the present time. The conditions were so unsettled, and the future course of events so entirely dependent on the duration of the war that we considered the most prudent way of dealing with the surplus would be by setting aside £700,000 as a special contingency fund, by strengthening the Investments Reserve Fund by the addition of £600,000, and by carrying forward the balance of £219,331. This method safeguards the interests of the policy-holders and shareholders, since it leaves a very large sum available for distribution when the proper time arrives, and at the same time it conserves the resources of the Company.

The shareholders, therefore, do not this year receive any portion of this surplus, since they share only in profits when such are declared.

It was felt that the suspension of bonus would act somewhat unfairly on those policy-holders whose policies become claims during the year either by death or maturity of endowment, and it has been decided, therefore, to pay a bonus in such cases when claims arise.

In the Industrial Branch the surplus is £1,043,025, which is about £500,000 less than the previous year. Here the same causes have operated in reducing surplus as in the Ordinary Branch, and as you have just heard the first call on that surplus was £342,365 for the increase of the Investments Reserve Fund.

Moreover, in the Industrial Branch we have an additional cause contributing to this reduction, namely, the Courts (Emergency Powers) Act. You will remember that last year we set aside £300,000 to meet the contingent liabilities arising under the Act, and it would have been possible to have drawn upon this special reserve for the purposes for which it was set aside. We have thought it better, however, to meet the strain out of the year's revenue, and maintain this reserve intact. In addition, it was found necessary to increase the reserve in order to meet the additional strain caused by the prolongation of the war. We have, therefore, carried £50,000 to this reserve, which stands as at the 31st December last at £350,000.

The Courts (Emergency Powers) Act, 1914, contained a provision that certain sections of Industrial policy-holders might during an indefinite period retain the benefit of their assurance policies without implementing their part of the contract by payment of premiums.

On the ground of expediency, the terms of these policies were over-ruled to the supposed advantage of the parties to one side of the contracts, but it should be borne in mind that Section 1 (b) of the Act was approved by the Legislature as part of emergency legislation only in the expectation that large classes of the Industrial population would, owing to the war, find their occupations gone or their incomes seriously reduced.

It is, happily, a matter of common knowledge that this expectation has proved to be entirely unwarranted, the industrial classes having enjoyed a degree of prosperity beyond all precedent in our history, and this condition of affairs has, in turn, led our statesmen to seek for some scheme of investment which will attract the surplus earnings of these classes of the people, who are encouraged by Act of Parliament to allow their assurance premiums to remain unpaid.

Having regard to the fact that the Company, during last year, purchased British War Loan and Treasury Bills to the value of nearly £12,000,000, it would seem that among the schemes which are being favourably considered by the Government with the object of attracting the savings of the small investor, the repeal of Section 1 (b) of the Courts (Emergency Powers) Act might well find a prominent place.

We actually find that the Act discourages savings, for many persons are suspending payment of premiums under its shelter who are better able to maintain them than in ordinary times. Some of those who have suspended payment on their existing policies have even gone so far as to take out new assurances, thus securing the benefit of two policies at the expense of one.

All these people are receiving free assurance at the expense of their fellow policy-holders, for, even though the premiums are unpaid, the Company is called upon to pay claims when death occurs.

In consequence of this Act and the other considerations I have mentioned, the Directors regret that the surplus in the Industrial Branch does not permit of any allotment to the Industrial Branch policy-holders under the profit-sharing scheme which was started in the year 1907.

You will remember that the shareholders at that time voluntarily gave up their rights in any surplus profits beyond a fixed amount except as regards one-sixth of such surplus profits, four-sixths being distributed amongst the Industrial Branch policy-holders and one-sixth among the outdoor staff. During the nine years the scheme has been in operation the policy-holders have had allotted to them £2,260,000 and the outdoor staff £565,000, or £2,825,000 in all. This year, conditions for which the Courts (Emergency Powers) Act is largely responsible, prevent any allotment of surplus profit being made to the outdoor staff or the policy-holders, and the shareholders not only receive no bonus, but further, their dividend is reduced by £100,000.

It was felt, however, that there would be some hardship in the case of claims on Industrial policies arising during the year, and in these circumstances it was decided to utilise the balance of bonus previously allotted to policy-holders but not yet distributed. At the close of the year this amounted to £151,882,

which sum, however, is subject to reduction on account of the bonus on claims arising for the first two months of 1916. A substantial sum remains at the present time, from which bonus additions will be made on all policies of ten years' duration and upwards. These bonuses will range from 2½ per cent. to 60 per cent. of the sum assured, according to the number of years' premiums which have been paid.

During the course of an extremely strenuous year we have proceeded uninterruptedly with the formation of agencies under the block system of collection, a method which I have explained to you on former occasions.

Last year I was able to tell you that we had concentrated nearly one-eighth of our Industrial Branch income, representing over £1,000,000 a year in 1,300 blocks.

The proportion has now grown from 12 per cent. to 27 per cent., the yearly income so concentrated from £1,000,000 to £2,400,000, and the number of blocks from 1,300 to 3,000.

The average weekly earnings of our Agency Staff have risen during the year by more than 2s., making an advance of 11s. during the past four years, and the increased value which is attached to our agencies is shown by the fact that in the four years referred to there has been a reduction of 7 per cent. in the proportion of agency changes.

One of the objects we sought to secure by the introduction of the block system of collection was an improvement in the status and remuneration of our Agency Staff, and it is satisfactory, therefore, to find that during the past year the rate of changes in block agencies was less than half the proportion of changes under the older agency system.

It is part of the programme of the Company that the benefit of any economy which increasing efficiency of method in the working of the Industrial Branch may render possible in normal times shall be participated in by the policy-holders of that Branch and by our outdoor Staff: this result is, as a matter of fact, secured by our profit-sharing scheme of 1907, to which I have already alluded.

Apart from the operation of this scheme, the Directors hold that efficiency resulting in economy should be rewarded, and they welcome the evidence of increased earning power on the part of the outdoor Staff, believing that it will result in advantage to all connections of the Company.

The devotion to duty with which the Staff, indoor and outdoor, have served the Company during a year of unprecedented difficulty has been beyond praise.

Realising that recruiting must fail to provide the men in numbers requisite for the success of our arms unless commercial interests were willing to make sacrifices in proportion to the dangers which threatened our country, the Directors announced that any member of the Staff able and willing to join the Colours should be permitted and encouraged to do so, and that the Prudential would not ask exemption for anyone of them.

The patriotism of our men corresponded to the action of the Directors: up to the end of last year 76 per cent. of the number of those of eligible age were already serving or had volunteered for service, and we are faced with the prospect of transacting the business of the Company with a Staff reduced by more than 10,000 men.

The Directors observe with gratification that a large proportion are serving as Commissioned Officers or in the higher non-commissioned ranks, showing that these members of their staff have either trained in times of peace or had subsequently spared no effort in becoming qualified, and in any case that they were willing to accept such responsibilities as they were considered fit to discharge.

Those who are ineligible for active service resolved that, to the extreme limit of their powers, the efficient commercial service for which the Company is justly celebrated should be maintained unimpaired.

You are aware that our two Voluntary Aid detachments devote some portion of their time, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, to Red Cross duty, and they have removed from the various London railway centres to hospitals and homes more than 65,000 sick and wounded men.

A number of our lady clerks and some of our maidservants attached to the Housekeepers Staff have also been engaged in Red Cross work as opportunity offered, at home and abroad.

The value of the commercial work of lady clerks has recently formed the subject of discussion throughout the Kingdom: for more than forty years we have given employment to a clerical staff of women, whose numbers have been increased since the passing of the National Insurance Act from 400 to 2,000 at our Chief Office, and I am happy to say that their work is performed in a manner which gives us great satisfaction.

In many cases they do not contemplate, as does a young man, the devotion of a lifetime to commercial pursuits, but when it is found possible to interest them in their work they display considerable ability, and their willingness to undertake responsibility is developing with commendable rapidity.

You will notice this year the Accounts include for the first time a Revenue Account and Balance-sheet for the General Branch. This arises from the fact that under our new Memorandum and Articles it is necessary for all business other than Life Assurance to be transacted in this Branch. The Sick Insurance business and the Contribution for Expenses for Approved Societies and any other business we may undertake in the future will appear in the accounts of the General Branch.

I am glad to report that the number of shareholders again shows a steady increase.

The total number of accounts open on December 31st, 1915, was 1,669, showing an increase of eighty-nine over last year.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like to say

that I have never known a Prudential Report of which I have been more proud than I am of the present one. Both indoor and outdoor we have worked with depleted staffs, we have contended with adverse legislation, we have faced unprecedented depreciation, yet, in spite of all these obstacles, we have accomplished a record increase in business. It is true that owing to the war the profit shown this year is less than that of previous years, but in all our actions we have been prompted by the consciousness of our national character and the well-known loyalty of our shareholders and of all connected with the Company.

We have, as you know, paid many thousands of claims in full which we were not legally bound to pay, but these claims have been paid in respect of men who died for their country, and I want to feel that, come what may, you will support a continuance of such action in the future.

It is also true that we have held over surplus instead of distributing it, and in so doing we have been providing not for present known liabilities but for possible contingencies, and I believe that this is exactly what would be expected and desired in this crisis by every policyholder and shareholder of the Prudential.

Sir Wm. J. Lancaster seconded the resolution, and after some remarks by Sir Wm. Plender, the report and accounts were unanimously agreed to.

In responding to a vote of thanks to the Staff, Mr. A. C. Thompson, the General Manager, said: Seeing that the privilege of addressing you in Annual Meeting comes to me once only in every forty-four years of service, and having regard to the vast interests included in this vote of thanks, there might be found some excuse for elaboration of acknowledgment were it not that discursiveness is entirely at variance with the habits of the Staff.

Whether the Staff is engaged in the completion of a proposal for assurance or in the sale of £8,000,000 of American Securities to the Government, the matter is carried through with the utmost despatch.

If it were possible for me to take an instantaneous poll of the Staff, I am certain that they would wish me to express their very high appreciation of the kindly terms in which the vote has been proposed and seconded, and of the cordial manner in which you have received and adopted it.

They would, I am equally sure, desire me, speaking for the Staff, to say that in all our relations with the Company nothing has more closely touched our hearts than the thoughtful and generous consideration with which the Directors on your behalf have treated those of our colleagues who have joined the Colours.

I have received thousands of letters from members of our Staff on Active Service, and have seen large numbers of the men who in their short intervals of leave have felt constrained to call at Holborn Bars to ask me to convey to our Directors some expression of the gratitude to the Company with which their hearts are overflowing.

The Chairman and others of the Directors have seen those letters and many of the men, and I wish you could see both, for I am sure you would go away more than ever convinced that the action of the Directors has been abundantly justified.

It is especially in times of great emergency that the difference between lofty ideals and mere commercialism of administration is clearly exposed, and I am glad indeed to be able to tell you that the Staff are tremendously proud of the Company and of the part it has taken in this unparalleled crisis in the affairs of the country.

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